STONES SOUL & WARHOL

AMY MAGIC & LOSS

MOJO
The Music

143 REVIEWS
JAMIE XX, WILLIE NELSON, SUFJAN STEVENS, PAUL SIMON & STING

"IN OUR HEADS WE NEVER BROKE UP"

FLEETWOOD MAC

REUNITED!

19 PAGE CELEBRATION
ALL 5 MEMBERS INTERVIEWED!

PLUS!

EMITT RHODES
BEN E KING
LITTLE FEAT
XTC
RICHARD HAWLEY
LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY
BOZ SCAGGS
LEON BRIDGES

DONOVAN
DYLAN, DOPE & DEVILMENT

FAITH NO MORE
"WE TURNED INTO COCKROACHES..."

THE BIRTH OF
THE CLASH
BY KEITH LEVENE

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JULY 2015

Issue 260

Alex Lake

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52 **EMITT RHODES** In the early '70s, no one was writing better pop songs than this "one-man Beatles" from California. Then litigation laid him low. Paul Myers pays a visit to hear his first album in 40 years.

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> "She knew that everything was falling apart."
>
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Richard Hawley goes to *Hollow Meadows*, MOJO Working, p18.

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24 BOZ SCAGGS The Texan soul stirrer gets confidential about Nashville, time out and covering Richard Hawley songs. And across the page, Shaun Ryder gets misty-eyed over *Unknown Pleasures*.

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32 SUSANNE SUNDFØR The dramatic Norwegian voice brings her operatic goth-EDM to Copenhagen and Stockholm.

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84 NEW ALBUMS Jamie xx builds shiny futures from dance's past. Plus Florence + The Machine; Shirley Collins, Karen Dalton covered.

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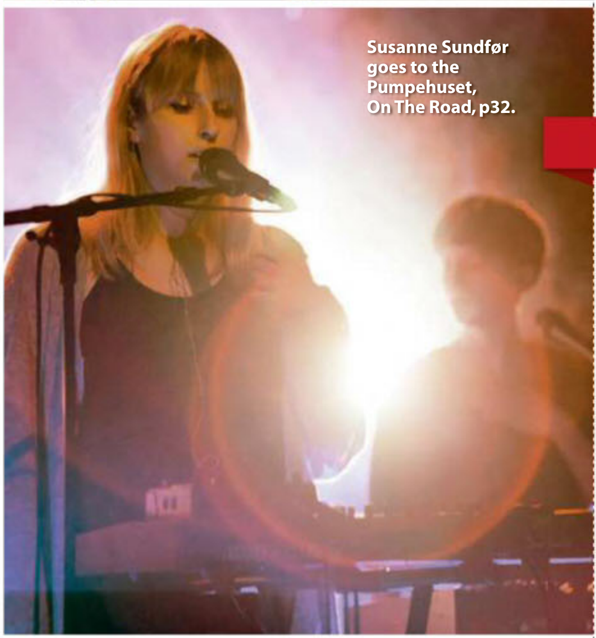
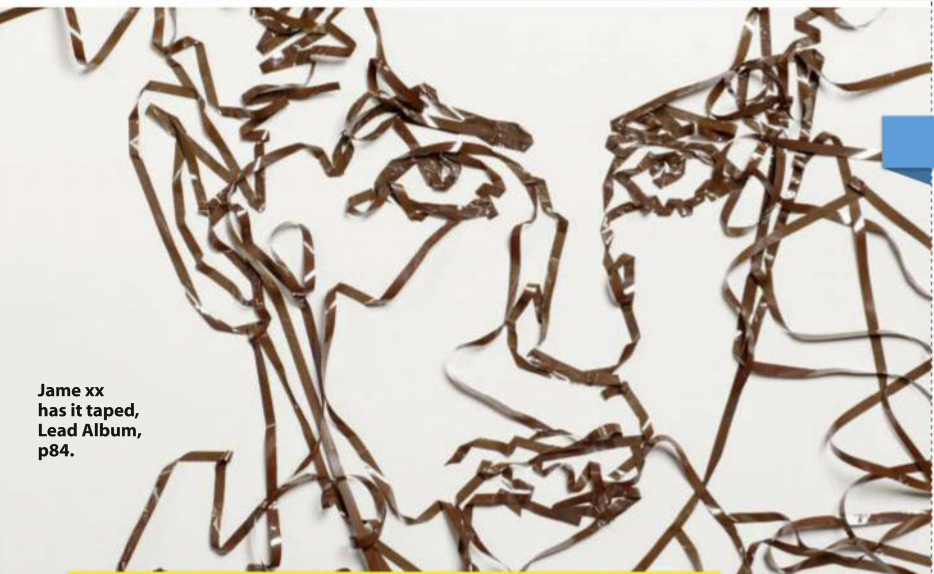
The Rolling Stones
Sticky Fingers



Susanne Sundfør goes to the Pumpehuset, On The Road, p32.



Jame xx has it taped, Lead Album, p84.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE

Priya Elan

Former reviews editor of NME, Priya has written for The Guardian, Times and Smash Hits. He was once mistaken for a member of The Strokes by Kanye West. And reviews this month's Lead Album, page 84.

Ian Wright

"I was always rifling through magazines and I still do," admits this month's Lead Album illustrator (page 84). "I remember my dear old Dad saying in passing, 'That cutting out will never get you anywhere…' He would laugh now – I've still got the scissors bug, along with pencils, pens, ink, paint, glue, tape, photocopiers…"

Paul Myers

Paul Myers says that finally meeting the reclusive Emitt Rhodes (page 52) in his fabled Hawthorne studio was something like "Willard meeting Kurtz in Apocalypse Now!" MOJO awarded four stars to Paul's most recent book, A Wizard, A True Star: Todd Rundgren In The Studio. Toronto born, he now lives in San Francisco, and on Twitter: @pulmyears.

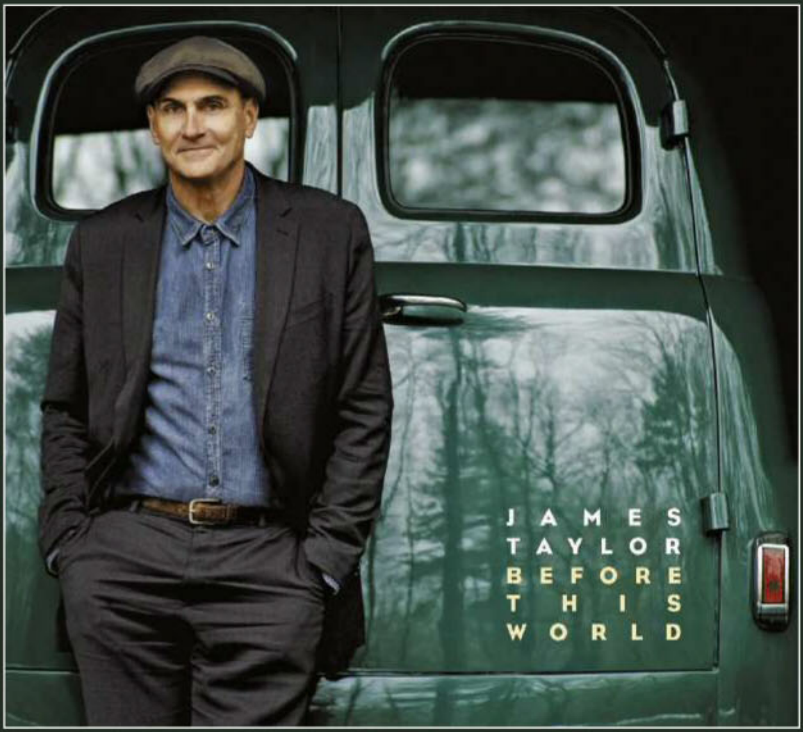
Ian Wright, Simon Fernandez (2)

BEFORE THIS WORLD

JAMES
TAYLOR

HIS FIRST ALBUM
OF ORIGINAL
MATERIAL IN
13 YEARS

OUT JUNE 15TH



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THE ROOTS OF FLEETWOOD MAC

MOJO PRESENTS 15 CLASSIC TRACKS THAT INSPIRED THE MAC

1 FREDDIE KING

San Ho Zay

Released in 1961, the same year as his Top 40 US hit Hide Away, Freddie King's instrumental San Ho Zay showcases the Texan Cannonball's unique guitar style. King's influence on British musicians was such that this tune was covered by both John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, while Mick Fleetwood and John McVie were in his band, and Chicken Shack, whose version appeared on their 1968 debut, *40 Blue Fingers, Freshly Packed And Ready To Serve*, featuring Christine Perfect on keyboards.

2 ELMORE JAMES

Shake Your Moneymaker

No musician exterted a greater influence on the nascent Fleetwood Mac than Elmore James. Born in 1918 in Holmes County, Mississippi, James began playing at the age of 12 and developed a style that appeared languid and urgent at the same time. The Mac acknowledged his influence on their debut covering two of his tunes, including this 1961 12-bar calling card originally recorded in New Orleans at Cosimo Mattasa's J&M Studios.

3 BUSTER BROWN

Doctor Brown

Not the most prolific of recording artists, Georgia-born Buster Brown recorded a handful of impressive rural blues tracks for Bobby Robinson's Fire Records (alongside the likes of Elmore James and Lightnin' Hopkins) and, later, the Vest label. The blues revival of the early '60s saw him co-write and record this honking and hooting tune, released in '61. Seven years later, Fleetwood Mac covered Doctor Brown on their second album, *Mr Wonderful*, and afforded Brown further cult status.

4 OTIS RUSH

So Many Roads

Left-handed guitarist Otis Rush cut his teeth in the Chicago clubs on both sides of the city in the '50s, and released an impressive string of singles on the Cobra which began with the much covered I Can't Quit You Baby in 1956. Four years later came this soulful, slow-burning Chess 45. The Bluesbreakers drew heavily on Rush's material, and their recent *Live In 1967* release sees Fleetwood, McVie and Peter Green delivering a spirited version of this tune.

9 BUDDY HOLLY

Rave On

It is hard to over-exaggerate the impact of Buddy Holly on modern music. Indeed, in this issue John McVie recalls the exact moment his life changed after visiting his cousin in Hounslow and finding him playing this tune. "I was hooked from that moment," he says of Rave On's instant influence. The track, which starts with Buddy's trademarked hiccoughing vocal, was one of six singles which Holly charted in 1958, prior to his tragic death in February of the following year.

10 THE KINGSTON TRIO

Greenback Dollar

Formed in San Francisco's Bay Area in 1957, The Kingston Trio's blend of close harmonies, folk guitars and rock thrust saw them attain instant success, establishing them as a huge influence on a generation of aspiring musicians. Among them was Lindsey Buckingham, 13 when the Trio issued this life-affirming tune. Buckingham's love of the Trio was underlined when he joined them on stage in 1981 and covered this tune. YouTube footage proves it was a heartfelt celebration.

11 LITTLE WILLIE JOHN

Need Your Love So Bad

Raised in Detroit in the '40s, Little Willie John began singing gospel before being signed to the King label by Henry Glover in 1955. What followed was a string of remarkable singles, including Fever which was later widely covered. This 1955 tune, written by John's brother Mertis, was an R&B hit which B.B. King then repurposed in '67, with the Mac covering it a year later and enjoying Top 40 success with it as a single.

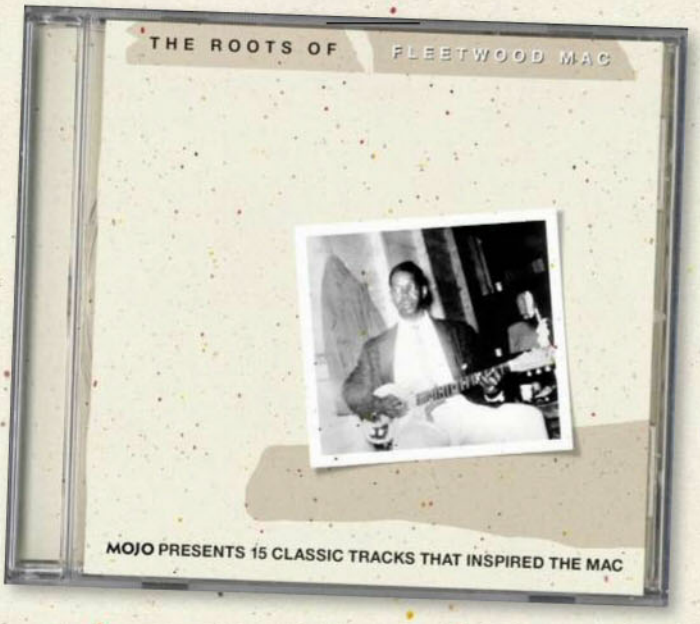
12 JIMMY ROGERS WITH HIS ROCKING FOUR

The World Is In A Tangle

Despite an original, laconic vocal style, Jimmy Rogers is one of Chess's less celebrated heroes, enjoying but moderate solo success in the '50s. His reputation in Chicago, however, was considerable, most notably due to his membership of Muddy Waters' first band with whom he helped define the city's driving blues guitar style. Fleetwood Mac tipped their hat to Rogers, covering this tune when they recorded at Chess in January '69.

Alamy (10), Getty Images (5)

As with so many artists of their generation, Fleetwood Mac found their voice through the blues – a genre that, as Mick Fleetwood states this issue, possessed a mythology and power that suggested an escape from the quotidian. Unlike so many of their peers, however, the original Mac were far more than mere blues dabblers. Theirs was a process of absorption that went further than most, their apprenticeship dating back to Peter Green, John McVie and Mick Fleetwood's stint in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, and later encouraged further by producer Mike Vernon's enthusiasm and deep knowledge. Welded to that immersion in the blues was a love of rock'n'roll, pop and folk which helped shape the outlook of various members. This collection features 15 tracks that have left their mark on Fleetwood Mac. Welcome then to a selection of music that remains truly inspiring and evergreen.


THE ROOTS OF FLEETWOOD MAC
MOJO PRESENTS 15 CLASSIC TRACKS THAT INSPIRED THE MAC

5 HOWLIN' WOLF

No Place To Go

Another Chicago blues colossus, Howlin' Wolf's influence on the burgeoning UK R&B scene of the '60s is evident (indeed, Led Zeppelin fans should be rather familiar with aspects of this tune). His impact was reinforced when the large-than-life Wolf toured Europe as part of American Folk Blues Festival in '62, stopping off to play a legendary show in Manchester. Six years later, Fleetwood Mac included this track – originally cut by Sam Phillips for Chess in 1951 – on their debut album.

6 LITTLE WALTER

Last Night

Marion 'Little' Walter Jacobs arrived in Chicago from Louisiana in 1945 and originally attempted to establish himself as a guitarist. Finding the competition fierce, he switched to harmonica and invented a distinctive sound that became the template for all blues harp players thereafter. Dead at 37 in 1968 following a night club fight, his legacy remains considerable, Fleetwood Mac paying tribute to Little Walter and covering this tune when they recorded at the Chess studios a year after his death.

7 FABIAN

Tiger

To many, Fabian (né Fabiano Forte) represents the neutering of post '57 rock'n'roll as US TV and radio stations tried to create sanitised stars they could control. And yet the Philly-born singer actually laid down a number of fine hip-thrusting tunes, Tiger included. As mentioned in this month's cover story, Fleetwood Mac covered this tune – a rough'n'ready version appearing on a three-disc set, *Live In Boston*, which was recorded at the Boston Tea Party in February 1970.

8 EDEN KANE

Well I Ask You

Like Fabian, British singer Eden Kane was groomed for success by an industry seeking to sell records to a teenage audience without upsetting their parents. Born Richard Sarstedt, he received an exotic stage name and cut Well I Ask You as his first 45 for Decca in '61. Topping the UK charts, this Crickets-lite tune influenced a young Mick Fleetwood. Further hits followed for Kane, and unlike most of his contemporaries he went on to enjoy a rich and varied career.

13 EDDIE BOYD

Five Long Years

Number 1 on the Billboard R&B chart in 1952, Eddie Boyd's most celebrated track chronicles the life of a factory worker who faces hard times and heartache in equal measure. The pianist had toured the UK in 1965 and recorded with Peter Green and John McVie in the Bluesbreakers two years later. In 1968 he then cut and released the *7936 South Rhodes* album on Mike Vernon's Blue Horizon label backed this time by Green, McVie and Mick Fleetwood.

14 ELMORE JAMES

Coming Home

Recorded in Chicago in April 1957 and issued on Mel London's Chief label as the flipside of The 12 Year Old Boy, Coming Home starts with the familiar slashing, wiry guitar motif that defined a number of his tunes, including the seminal Dust My Broom. That classic plus this track were covered by Fleetwood Mac on their second album, *Mr Wonderful* – the long-player that also saw Christine Perfect make her debut with the band on keyboards. Indeed, her presence is felt on a psych-jazz reading of Coming Home.

15 ROBERT JOHNSON

Hellhound On My Trail

Robert Johnson's tale of a Faustian pact was recorded on Sunday in June 1937, and helped cement the devilry myths that have so enveloped the blues since then. Subsequently acknowledged as cornerstone of modern music, close to eight decades on this track retains all of its power. Fleetwood Mac's version of this tune appears on their self-titled debut, on which guitarist Jeremy Spencer delivered a sparse, sensitive solo rendition featuring him on piano and vocals.

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George Clinton

DR FUNKENSTEIN WILL SEE YOU NOW

What music are you currently grooving to?

Kendrick Lamar's album. I did a couple of songs with him and his album is so hot. My grandkids show me new stuff on YouTube. I heard **Alabama Shakes** recently – a great voice and a great sound.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Ooh, it's got to be *Sgt. Pepper's*. From an artist's and a songwriter's point of view that record just stands the tests of all the times. **The Beatles**! I watch the Yellow Submarine movie to this day – whenever I want to erase everything from my mind.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Why Do Fools Fall In Love by **Frankie Lymon**. I worked in a record store when I was about 13 – Essex Records on Clinton Avenue in New Jersey.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Smokey Robinson. I wanted to be like him – writing for other people and myself. I liked it that you never heard anyone say anything bad about Smokey. To be a record executive and still have everyone like you, that's some hard shit to do. People hate you if you're the boss.

What do you sing in the shower?

I sing out in the woods and out on the boat fishing, where people can't hear me! I just make up new shit.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

When I was younger it would have been **Sam Cooke** – You Send Me. That was a record where you were gonna get some sex… that and **The Platters** and **Johnny Mathis**.

And your Sunday morning record?

Back in the old days it would have been **Mahalia Jackson** – Amazing Grace. Today it would be **Kim Burrell**. She is the Aretha Franklin of gospel.

George Clinton's Chocolate City: London P-Funk Live At Metropolis is available from thisismetropolis.com.

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING…

Du Blonde

FORMERLY KNOWN AS BETH JEANS HOUGHTON

What music are you currently grooving to?

Right now I'm listening to If You Can't Give Me Everything by **Reigning Sound**, from their record *Too Much Guitar*, and Complete Consumption Of Us Both by **Barr**. And I'm looking forward to the debut albums by **Wolf Alice**, **Hinds**, and also **Deap Vally**'s new record, whenever that may be.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

I'd have to say *All Things Must Pass* by **George Harrison**. Brilliantly written, well played songs, good sentiments and subject matter that spans heartbreak, death, love and advice. Kind of like a well rounded education from a wholesome parent.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

The first record I ever bought with my own money was *Oops! …I Did It Again* by **Britney Spears**. I was 10 years old on a family holiday in Canada. We took a motorhome through the Rocky Mountains and I got bitten 72 times by mosquitos. My mum taped oven mitts on my hands so I couldn't scratch and this was the soundtrack to my torture.

Scope Features

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

If I could gain the mental organisation **Frank Zappa** must have had to execute his vast and unapologetic ideas I'd be happy. His coverage of genres was expansive and his lead guitar playing was phenomenal.

What do you sing in the shower?

Beyoncé, obviously.

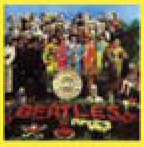
What is your favourite Saturday night record?

fIREHOSE – *Ragin', Full-On*. But in all honesty my Saturday nights are usually spent working before searching for Binaural ASMR videos to fall asleep to.

And your Sunday morning record?

Walking Field by **Peals** – an awesome instrumental duo made up of **William Cashion** of **Future Islands** and **Bruce Willen** of **Double Dagger**. The kind of music you'd be happy to be born to, live to and die to.

Du Blonde's UK tour begins June 3. Welcome Back To Milk is out now on Mute



NOW PLAYING

- Standing the test of all times, George Clinton always plays the Fabs' *Sgt. Pepper's*. And achieves mind-wipe by watching Yellow Submarine!
- May Pang's Saturday night disco fave is A Taste Of Honey's still-inarguable 1978 Boogie Oogie Oogie. Now, get up on the floor!
- When able, Du Blonde spends Saturday nights rocking and reeling to the 1986 debut LP by fIREHOSE, successors to the Minutemen.

May Pang

LENNON'S LOST WEEKEND INAMORATA

What music are you currently grooving to?

In my car I listen to all the current-day stuff and my favourite right now is Uptown Funk [**Mark Ronson**]. It reminds me of the soulful music I loved from the old days, like **Junior Walker** and **James Brown**.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Wow, I grew up on such a variety – we had American Bandstand with **Chuck Berry, Beach Boys** and everyone, and since I lived in Spanish Harlem, all the Latino stuff as well. But OK, it would have to be *Meet **The Beatles***, the raw early stuff. Who was my favourite Beatle as a kid? **Ringo**.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

In the old days in Woolies and all those places there was a little record corner where they would have 45s. I still have mine. I think the first one I bought might have been a **Bobby Rydell** record, Wild One.

Which musician have you ever wanted to be?

I guess I wanted to be one of The Beatles, it didn't matter which one.

What do you sing in the shower?

Whatever's playing on the radio in the background, which usually means an old '60s tune. The most recent one I can remember singing along to was **The Shirelles**' Will You Love Me Tomorrow.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Something that gets you up and dancing, like Disco Inferno. My favourite actually is Boogie Oogie Oogie, **A Taste Of Honey**. Those girls were beautiful. That one or **The Drifters**' Up On The Roof, because I love all those Brill Building songs and because that song, for me, was New York City, going up to the top of the building at night to look out at the city lights.

And your Sunday morning record?

Anything that has harmonies – it's that church thing. My favourite is **The Everly Brothers**, Cathy's Clown, the kind of vocals that just ease you into the day.

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SUCH IS THE SPAN OF FLEETWOOD MAC'S career that it is almost impossible to contain their remarkable story in a single issue of MOJO. But we've done just that by asking the people who know the Mac story from the inside and are delighted to present five individual interviews with Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Christine McVie, Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham. Conducted by Jim Irvin in Los Angeles a few weeks ago, the 19-page piece chronicles the band's history from its start to their long-anticipated reunion with Christine. Soundtracking this issue, we offer a set of songs that influenced the band in a variety of ways in celebration of a unique musical force. Enjoy this issue and enjoy the Mac shows. Until next month…

PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I can pick anyone I choose

Your cover photo of Paul Weller on MOJO 259 made him look like he's rocking the Bond villain/stalag kommandant look. In a good way, obviously. Also, cheers for the review of *Mwng* by Super Furry Animals. I'm not kidding – this is one of the greatest, most inventive bands I've ever heard. And I'm 347. Bach? Phooey. Love ya,

Neil Todd, via e-mail

I don't do requests

MOJO 259 was another excellent issue. Time and time again the articles in your magazine restore my faith in music. However, I was surprised to see that you omitted the finest album in Grateful Dead's canon, the outstanding *Workingman's Dead*. It is such an exceptional recording that I believe it warrants an article on its own. While I'm here, how about an issue dedicated to Americana, from its humble origins (Gene Clark, Little Feat, the Dead) to the present day? Had Kurt Cobain lived, I'm increasingly of the belief that he would have become one of its finest students. Here's to another 259 issues of your great magazine.

Ceri P, Swansea.

One hell of a show

Thanks for your article about the Grateful Dead in MOJO 259. The band were very much sidelined by the UK music press after 'punk/new wave' in '76 and often derided. I remember Peel criticising them and their fans from '76 onward, while conveniently forgetting shouting that they were "the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world" over the PA after their (first European) appearance at the legendary Hollywood Music Festival, 1970, at Leycett, near Newcastle-under-Lyme (which I witnessed). Nick Kent, I also remember, wrote a very sarcastic and dismissive review in NME of *Wake Of The Flood* and *From The Mars Hotel* when they were released as a double album in '77 or thereabouts. You yourselves omitted Garcia from that list of best guitarists you published a while back. Very odd. I am also pleased that *Reckoning* got a credit in your list of recommended albums. I last saw them in 1990 and they were excellent, finishing a long concert (weren't they all, and very good value – unlike seeing Dylan in his religious phase, for example, playing for less than 90 minutes and refusing to play anything from his earlier periods) with Dear Mr Fantasy. There are a lot of very good bonus tracks on the CD versions of some of their albums: *Aoxomoxoa*, for example, has four live bonus tracks, including The Eleven Jam.

On the tube back from the 1990 gig, I sat opposite two young teenage lads who were planning out which European gigs they were going to attend, which made me smile: you're either on the bus or off the bus. Nowadays I'm too old and creaky to even run for the bus, let alone ride it. I feel happy, though, that I saw that original band line-up in 1970. There is now a CD of their Hollywood performance, by the way (with a somewhat dodgy DVD).

Terry Maunder, Leeds

Who do you love?

Re: Theories, Rants etc in MOJO 259. Tim Mickleburgh writes that Blur will never be a great group because "Damon Albarn can't sing". First, I'm not some big Blur fan sticking up for Albarn, but hang on a minute. They are a great band, a band who represented a generation, a genre, a time

➢

≺ and are still evolving today rather than cashing in on past laurels – this you've got to admire. Secondly, somewhat of an endless list, but to name a few: Bob Dylan, John Lydon, Terry Hall, Shaun Ryder… none of them could 'sing'. It's rock'n'roll, mate, not opera.

Zyd Hockey, Ely, Cambs

Out there in the zone

Thanks very much for reminding me of John Lennon's 50th Birthday bash in MOJO 259. A blast from my past. I was just 13 years old and my 17-year-old sister was given permission to take me along to my first music concert (if we forget about seeing The Weather Girls at New Brighton swimming baths when I was seven, and God knows I have tried). Reading your article has brought back some memories, such as Terence Trent D'Arby performing with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, a relatively unknown Lenny Kravitz, plus Kylie in a fine pair of black hotpants. My main memory, though, was of a woman and man arriving part-way through the concert and the woman shouting at the man, who I assume was her partner, because he'd made them miss Lou Reed. She then pulled out a silver pipe in the shape of a skull and smoked it in a huff with her back to the man. I'm not sure what she was smoking but it must have been good as she really seemed to enjoy Wet Wet Wet. Ah happy days

Chris, The Wirral, via e-mail

A great champion

What a brilliant idea to have Ian Hunter write a follow-up to his original rock'n'roll diary 40 years or more down the line in MOJO 259. As a teenage reader of the original when it first came out, I was initially disappointed about the lack of salacious details on drugs and groupies. But I soon bought into the enthusiasm for music, life on the road and guitar shops (are there none in Japan?). I have had the pleasure of seeing Ian Hunter a number of times down the years – with Mott, with Mick Ronson and with his current band. He has somehow mastered the trick of remaining charismatic without disappearing up his own arse. If there's a 30-CD box set coming out, not every track will be an absolute pearl but the hit rate will be massively higher than any of his contemporaries. I'll stop there in case I start to sound like the guy he had rushing to the stage with his hand down his trousers. Although, maybe you might want to think about asking for a regular contribution?

Richard Mellish, South London

All part of life's rich pattern

Despite not being a fan of Blur, I must say that your recent article on the band in MOJO 258 was intriguing, well-written, and also gave the reader an idea as to the intense, and (at times) seemingly torturous existence of being in a band such as Blur, led by one with expectations as high as Damon Albarn's. However, I also feel I must point out that the front cover of the issue was ruined by the rather too intense photo of the band, particularly Damon Albarn's 'escaped convict' look. Forgive me if I sound like an old bore (I'm actually only 16) but not only did I take great pleasure in leaning on the magazine to do my homework, but I also, while on a train, felt obliged to put the issue back into my bag after receiving wary, slightly scared looks from the elderly gentleman opposite. Maybe, considering the name of the band's latest album, a nice picture of a 'Mr Whippy' would have been more appropriate?

Imogen Harrison, via e-mail

For our home audience

I have been a happy reader of MOJO since the first issue. Congratulations for the superb illustration of Sufjan Stevens in MOJO 257 and the excellent features on Sandy Denny and The Beach Boys in MOJO 258. I have been a fan of The Beach Boys and Fairport Convention since their early days and was fortunate to see and hear Sandy with the group at Trinity College, Dublin in the late '60s. Re: Andrew Male's list of Sandy's post-Fairport highlights, he rightly praises the recording of the traditional Irish melody My Lagan Love on 1972's *Sandy*. The air of this song was collected by Belfast collector and arranger Herbert Hughes in Co. Donegal and words were put to My Lagan Love by my grandfather, Ulster poet Joseph Campbell (1874-1944). It was first published in 1904. The song has since become a classic, recorded by a host of singers (Dusty Springfield, Kate Bush, Bryn Terfel) but Sandy's is one of the finest and most beautiful versions.

Julian Campbell, Cork, Ireland

You're beautiful

I'm no fan of Paul Weller or The Prodigy but I'd still argue that MOJO 259 was a very good issue. Rundgren, the Dead, but especially your Billie Holiday tribute. Neneh Cherry was great, Michael Simmons was hip, Phil Sutcliffe was weird but Fred Dellar's piece on Billie at the Flamingo truly blew my mind. Just doing the maths, Fred Dellar, present at her last official gig, in February 1954. Oh. My. God. That was over 61 entire years ago. I'm flabbergasted. I think I remember Fred writing studio reports for the NME back in the day but I didn't realise how truly steeped in music history he was. You have this oracle in your midst and you are not doing enough with him. You must ask him to write more wonderfully evocative features like this. What about some of his more memorable encounters? It has to be one of my favourite MOJO features in a long time. Hats off, Mr D.

Michael O'Neill, via e-mail

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WHAT GOES

LEEMOVIE

SCRATCH ON SCREEN

Fifteen years in the making, new Lee Perry documentary film Vision Of Paradise reveals the Upsetter's mystic cosmology. Can and Killing Joke assist!

Upsetter fans, rejoice: a new Lee Perry documentary is headed for our screens. Lee 'Scratch' Perry's Vision Of Paradise was assembled from hundreds of hours of footage that German director Volker Schaner shot with Perry over the last 15 years. "There is something so mysterious and sparkling in Lee Perry's music," Schaner explains. "I always wanted to understand this man and his cosmos, and to make a film with and about him."

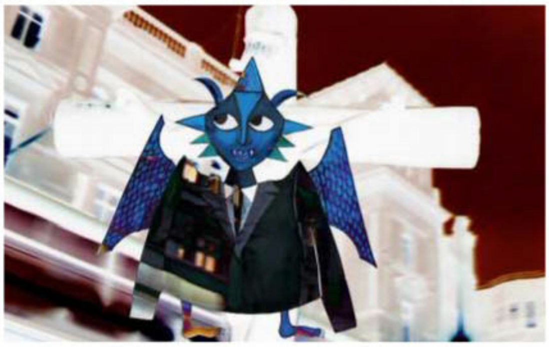
Schaner's original idea was to cast Perry as the Messiah in a dramatic work, The Revelation Of Lee 'Scratch' Perry, conceived with scriptwriter Guy Leder. Filming began in 1999, but Leder's tragic sudden death quashed the project until Perry insisted that Schaner continue it himself. "One year later Lee gave a concert in Berlin and I heard him singing, 'Volker, come to me, I need help!' for one whole song. Backstage, we embraced each other and said we would continue the movie, whatever. I began to visit him regularly, without a clear plan, just following him with my camera, collecting scenes. He always wanted to have a copy of the tape immediately, to store the energy. Some tapes he played on a loop for months in his studio, and some he brought to the [ruins of the] Black Ark in Jamaica, where he buries everything he does in the earth."

Unlike the disappointing 2008 documentary, The Upsetter Movie, Visions Of Paradise uses only original film and Perry's classic recordings, and eschews chronological biography to focus instead on Perry's often confounding worldview, related in his own words. "Jamaica was under a savage rule, with politicians who were playing a part for the CIA," says Perry in the film. "We decided to show the people that they can survive with a positive vibration of an art and culture for themselves, if they just believe in Jah Rastafari." We also learn that stones are living creatures with beating hearts, that Perry's own brain is made of rock stone, that Haile Selassie lives in Perry's boots, and that Bob Marley "wasn't a normal person – he was extra greedy." There are also animated sequences to give visual shape to some of Perry's more esoteric utterances, and scenes shot in Ethiopia. Testimony from Dennis Bovell, Martin 'Youth' Glover, and Irmin Schmidt of Can adds good context.

Schaner says this labour of love was a learning experience. "After a shoot we often sat, desperate, and said, 'It's not working. He is not answering one question, but keeps saying crazy things we won't be able to use.' But you just have to be open to following him, leave the traditional interview method and join the happening. And what we learned from him is his determination of 'Good over Evil.' He is convinced that a human being can turn back into an angel being, just by saying 'I am.' The facts will follow the words: first you change your mindset, and then you can change the world. And this is pure white magic."

David Katz

Perry and the director attend the film's debut UK screening at London's Genesis Cinema on July 4.



VISION PARADISE

Roast fish, water weed and cornbread: (left) Scratch takes a refreshing dip, Jamaica; (right) The Upsetter on-stage in Leicester, April 9, 2015; (below) an animation from the Visions Of Paradise movie; (bottom) the film's poster.

"HE IS CONVINCED THAT A HUMAN BEING CAN TURN BACK INTO AN ANGEL BEING."
Director Volker Schaner

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YOUR FLEXIBLE FRIEND

After the vinyl renaissance, can the flexidisc be poised for a comeback? Plus, Flexipop! returns.

Somewhere in a far-flung Prague suburb, there's a hand-built machine that does something that no other machine in the world can do. Shipped over piece by piece from San Francisco last year, it presses flexidiscs – the transparent plastic records popular with Soviet propagandists in the 1960s and, 20 years later, synonymous with post-punk and New Romantic promotional giveaways.

But now these flimsy 7-inch wonders are back big time. "The vinyl wave is huge and is getting bigger," explains Tom McFaull from Pirates Press, owners of said contraption, as well as Europe's largest vinyl pressing plant. "But there's also growing demand for flexidiscs. If you're an up-and-coming band, it's a great thing to send out to people. Big bands like Blur have ordered them too, our machine is very busy at the moment."

Among early adopters of the once extinct format was Jack White, who in 2012 ordered 1,000 flexis of the *Blunderbuss* track Freedom At 21, then released them into the Nashville air attached to blue helium balloons. A year later, White's Third Man label followed up with Butthole Surfers frontman Gibby Haynes' Paul's Not Home flexi, on specially sourced old X-ray film. Plans for the next Third Man flexi were thwarted when Pirates Press had to manufacture 400,000 national anthem flexis for the Swiss postal service. But thereafter the press – a hybrid of old and new technology – was freed up to make Record Store Day promos for Domino artists, including Villagers, John Maus and Cass McCombs, adding to other releases by Foo Fighters, Run DMC and, recently, Tobias Jesso Jr.

And for true flexi-nuts there is more: the original makers of the much-loved Flexipop! magazine, published from 1981 to '83, have compiled the best of the mag into a colourful new book. It's a fascinating period piece: each Flexipop! came with a free flexidisc (gems like The Jam's Boy About Town/Pop Art Poem; The Cure's Lament), super-goofy stories and photo-shoots, and a design aesthetic that could only be described as eccentric. "It was designed by this guy Mark Manning [aka future grebo rocker Zodiac Mindwarp], who'd never designed anything in his life," explains editor Barry Cain. "He was on a lot of substances, which is why it looked like it did."

Selling 100,000 copies at its height, Flexipop! never recovered from a three-month newsagent ban after a photo-story featuring psychobilly kings The Meteors covered in blood and offal. "The exact accusation used was 'gratuitous violence and cannibalism'," says Cain. "A gran bought the issue for her granddaughter because it had Haircut 100 in it. She made a complaint." As a kiss-off to its detractors, the final issue featured nefarious occultist Aleister Crowley on the cover.

Naturally, the Flexipop! book comes with a free flexi by Spandau Ballet and Marc Almond, pressed at Pirates. "I can't believe how much interest there is in it," says Cain. "People just love the whole flexidisc thing."

Pat Gilbert

Visit www.flexipop.com for details of how to order the Flexipop! Book.

Rah wobble! (main) A flexidisc fan feels the quality; (top) a spread from Flexipop! The Book, where Depeche Mode's Dave Gahan enjoys a banana; (right) the book package; (below) record connoisseur Jack White.

"FLEXIPOP! NEVER RECOVERED FROM A THREE-MONTH NEWSAGENTS BAN."

MOJO DIARY

JUNE 5

The long-awaited **Brian Wilson** biopic Love & Mercy gets its US cinema release. Starring **Paul Dano** (above) and **John Cusack** as the young and older Brian, and **Paul Giamatti** as Brian's therapist **Dr Eugene Landy**, it tells of Brian's Icarus flight in the '60s and eventual return to health and creativity. Also looming is Wilson's September arena tour, when he'll be joined by **Edwyn Collins**.

JUNE 24

The 33rd Glastonbury festival takes place at Worthy Farm, Pilton, with acts ranging from **The Who**, **Mavis Staples** and **Patti Smith** to **FKA Twigs** (above), **Flying Lotus** and **Jamie xx**, plus masses more. And in proof that reconciliation is never impossible, **The Fall** are booked for the first time since 1992. Maybe MES will update 1995's Glasto-referencing outdoor gig weird-out Bonkers In Phoenix?

JUNE 30

Steve Earle's memoir I Can't Remember If We Said Goodbye is published. A "literary work in three acts", it covers his early life, the Texas music milieu of the 1970s, his years of addiction and eventual recovery, and his associations with songwriting mentors including **Townes Van Zandt**, **Guy Clark** and **Willie Nelson**. But, he cautions, "It's not an autobiography."

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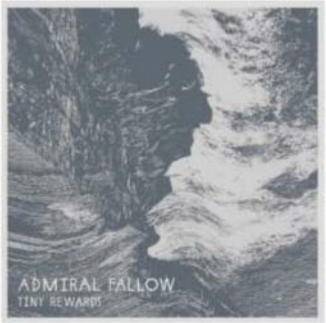
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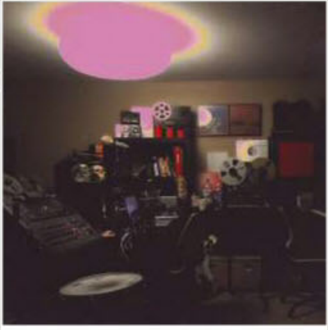

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MOJOWORKING

RICHARD HAWLEY

The West Riding's rocking truth seeker readies album number eight.

"There were cobwebs, rust," says Richard Hawley, sat this April afternoon in the bar of Neepsend's studio/venue Yellow Arch. "But getting on the bike again… it still works." He's talking about playing in Dublin on April 13, his live return after two years away. He could also be reflecting on making *Hollow Meadows*, his first new album since 2012's Top 3 hit *Standing At The Sky's Edge*.

The process began with self-imposed quiet. After touring the latter album under the influence of opioid pain medication Tramadol, prescribed after he broke his leg in Barcelona in June 2012 ("that shit fucked me up," he shudders), he returned to the family home in Sheffield.

"I really missed them and really had the urge to just stop. Another reason I took a huge hiatus off was, you've got to take the pan off the boil. 'Cos if you don't there's gonna be no water left, and you'll have nothing real to write about."

With no release schedule in mind, new songs were written over 18 months in Disgracelands, his "cabin in the woods" retreat. For the first time, he fully demo'd all the tracks before going into Yellow Arch at the beginning of March with regular guitar foil Shez Sheridan and co-producer Colin Elliot. "Recording a song spontaneously, you capture its essence at a really raw level, but you can lose its developmental stages," explains Hawley. "I'm still obsessed with first or second takes, but there seems to be more of a direction of where it's going."

Martin Simpson, whose *Vagrant Stanzas* LP Hawley produced in 2013, plays on one track, while fiddler Nancy Kerr's contribution was given a John Cale makeover by being re-recorded inside a metal brazier. Hawley stresses this isn't a folk record, though, and that it will feature no "big string arrangements" and fewer guitar solos.

In their studio space, MOJO sits with Hawley, Elliot and Sheridan to hear unfinished mixes. I Still Want You is an intimate homecoming song which recalls the velvet embrace of the singer's earliest solo records, while Sometimes I Feel is a country-leaning, sunlit surge on the wonder of it all. Contrastingly, Which Way turns up the drums and guitars for a dizzying psych rocker. Unavailable for listening is What Love Means, which ruminates on Hawley's daughter leaving for university. "We've *just* done it," he says. "It's the quietest song, and now we've got to crack on, to capture the vibe of it… what *does* love mean? I'm fucked if I know. That's why I wrote the song, ha!"

He's unwilling to elaborate further, though the LP title relates as ever to the Sheffield A To Z, and may touch on uncovered family history. "There used to be a little village on the outskirts of Sheffield, called Hawsley," he adds. "It means 'Lost Place' basically… but all will be revealed, later."

Ian Harrison

Ciggy bop: Richard Hawley and his signature guitar, Yellow Arch studios, Sheffield, April 15, 2015.

> "NOW WE'VE GOT TO CRACK ON, TO CAPTURE THE VIBE OF IT."

FACT SHEET

Title: Hollow Meadows

Due: August

Producers: Richard Hawley, Colin Elliot, Shez Sheridan

Songs: What Love Means / Which Way / I Still Want You / Sometimes I Feel

The Buzz: "It's about the songs and the words and definitely the voice, which I deliberately fucked up with effects on the last album, 'cos I'd got so pissed off with being perpetually called a crooner… there is a bit of rock'n'roll on it, too. Like [redacted]

Richard Hawley

ALSOWORKING

…fresh from their soundtrack to **The Duke Of Burgundy**, **CAT'S EYES** (Rachel Zeffira, right) start work on a new LP, **Steve Osborne** producing. In a statement, the band reveal: "Our second album continues the narrative from the first…" Titles include Girl In The Room, Drag and Everything Moves Towards The Sun…

DAVE WAKELING, who now leads **The English Beat** from California, is crowdfunding a new album titled *Here We Go Love*… **BARRY GIBB**'s been in the Hit Factory recording his new LP with engineer and producer **John Merchant**. New songs include the country-sounding A Home Truth Song… **SYSTEM 7** release a dual album in autumn. Says **Steve Hillage**, "we're doing two albums, *X-Port* with System 7, which is uptempo, and *N-Port* with **Mirror System**, which is more of a chill-out experience"… **THE ZUTONS' Dave McCabe** releases his solo debut *Church Of Miami* in September. With songs including Fake Emotion and Who's That Talking exploring tech's encroachment into our lives, McCabe says, "it sounds like a GTA soundtrack, an amalgamation of the '80s, '90s and me… the story is a build up and breakdown of a cybernetic relationship between man and machine where the machine gets too clever"… **MASSIVE ATTACK** (Daddy G, left) have been in the studio with **Run The Jewels** and **These New Puritans**…

Getty Images

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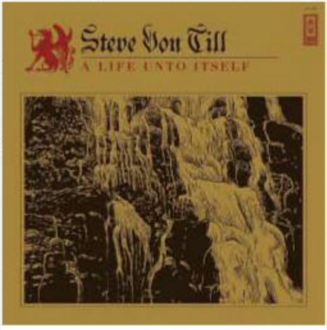
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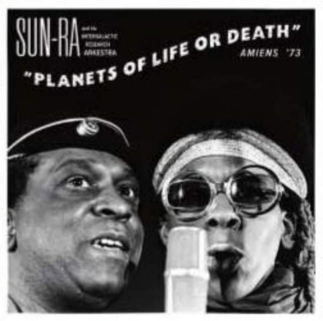
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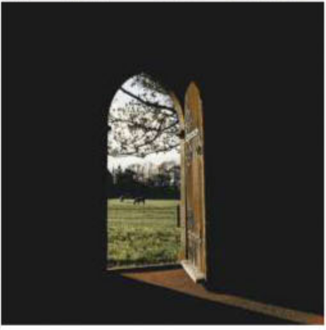

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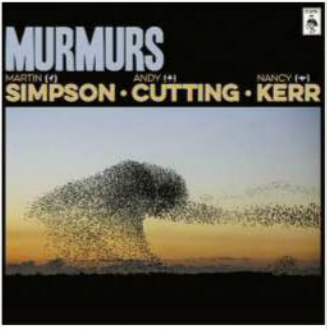
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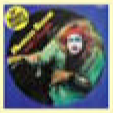
MOJO PLAYLIST

Turn on and tune in for Fabs/Lou Reed covers, jump jive, rural drone folk and a whole lot more…

1 JOHN METCALFE

JUST LET GO (FT. NATASHA KHAN)

Over the years, orchestrator/composer John Metcalfe's been a member of The Durutti Column and worked with Peter Gabriel,Blur, Coldplay and more. Here he reveals the first track off new solo LP *The Appearance Of Colour*, where Bat For Lashes' Natasha Khan provides AutoTune'd vocals, which serve as an extra tone within a neo-classical, beat-driven piece that unfolds strikingly. Suitably for a song that features fireworks behind the eyes, Metcalfe "sees" notes as colours – "D major is a rich green, A minor is pale yellow, C major is bright red. I have strong reactions to colour…"
Find It: *SoundCloud*



2 HOT CHOCOLATE MINDLESS BOOGIE 12-INCH

Need an acerbic, spooky disco groover about Cold War nuclear fear, the Jonestown Massacre and how music is a soporific drug? Then Errol Brown (RIP) and the lads have a song for you. Was this Hot Chocolate's Ball Of Confusion?
Find It: *YouTube*

3 KURT COBAIN AND I LOVE HER

From the Montage Of Heck film, a haunting guitar and voice version of the *A Hard Day's Night* song, with some typically Cobain harmonic amendments adding shades of gravity and doom undreamt of by the original.
Find It: *YouTube*

4 BECK SATELLITE OF LOVE

At the 30th annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductions in April, Beck, Fun voice Nate Ruess and band pay homage to dear departed Lou Reed with a loyal but heartfelt interpretation of one of his finest, most immortal songs.
Find It: *YouTube*

5 BRITISH SEA POWER OUT OF MY MIND ON DOPE AND SPEED

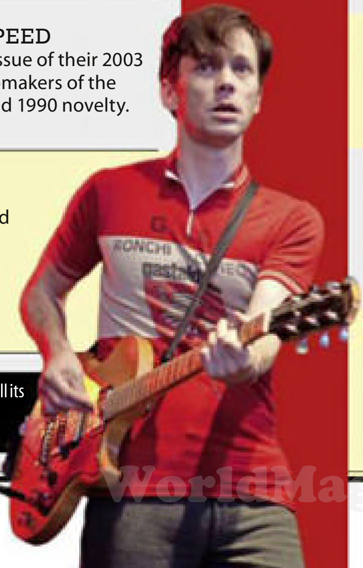
Taken from the hormone-injected, expanded reissue of their 2003 debut *The Decline Of…*, Cumbria's indie rock mapmakers of the heroic subconscious cover Julian Cope's unhinged 1990 novelty.
Find It: *YouTube*

6 SLEAFORD MODS NO ONE'S BOTHERED

Finding the spot where the breakbeat is absorbed by early-'80s lumpen-punk, a blank-voiced song of profound alienation that was, aptly, released on the day of the General Election. From impending album *Key Markets*.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

Synesthesia said than done: (top) singer Natasha Khan advises, Just Let Go; (below) BSP's Yan looks beyond.

"BRITISH SEA POWER COVER JULIAN COPE'S UNHINGED NOVELTY."



ROKSAN MOJO listens to all its music on Roksan equipment

7 GAPPY RANKS GENERATION

Harlesden dancehall MC uses a recharged take on the 1993 Shine A Criss rhythm – or is that Herb Alpert's Lonely Bull? – for a persuasive, upful meditation on staying true to reggae roots.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

8 FUCKED UP CALIFORNIA COLD

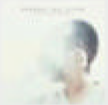
From Year Of The Hare – the latest in the Ontario prog-punks Zodiac-themed EP series – it starts a little like The Who, then goes deep-brain jam, with flutes.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

9 NIK TURNER HYPERNOVA

Joined by The Doors' Robby Krieger and Gong's Gilli Smyth, among others, the sax-toting Thunder Rider stretches out into tribalistic cosmic jazz rock on a cut from latest LP *Space Fusion Odyssey*.
Find It: *YouTube*

10 FUTURE ISLANDS HAUNTED BY YOU

A double-A side with The Chase, out on 4AD on June 30, here Herring and the crew reflect in bittersweet, melodically affecting style on separation, lost romance, the past, and all that stuff. Sob!
Find It: *YouTube*



11 SHARON VAN ETTEN I DON'T WANT TO LET YOU DOWN

After the catharsis of last year's *Are We There*, the title track to SVE's new EP is almost one a milkman might whistle. There's lyrical anxiety, but the melody soars.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

12 THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS SOMETIMES I FEEL SO DESERTED

From new album *Born In The Echoes* – which features Q-Tip, St. Vincent and Cate Le Bon – this steep-gradient house builder suggests the brain-drilling frequencies of 1999's *Surrender*.
Find It: *YouTube*

13 RYAN ADAMS SUMMER OF '69

Live at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville in April, Ryan Adams plays a plaintive, lonesome cover of his near-namesake Bryan Adams' monster hit of 1985.
Find It: *YouTube*

14 DITCH DIGGERS WALKS ON THE BEACH

Black Swans' Jerry David DeCicca and Ohio-based drone doyen Mike Shiflet meet, DeSicca punctuating Shiflet's grey rain of noise with peals of guitar and murmurs of abstract drugstore poetry.
Find it: *SoundCloud*

15 CHUCK HIGGINS AND THE MELLOTONES OH YEAH

From 1956, a riot of good-times, jump-jazz, R&B honking and boogie-woogie affirmation. On Ace's new *Wow, Wow, Baby!* comp.
Find It: *YouTube*

16 RIVERTONES 003 THE BOUNDWAY/BABB HILL

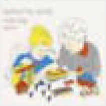
From Caught By The River's audio imprint, two hypnotic knots of rural drone folk, inspired by Melissa Harrison's novel of haunted English lanes, At Hawthorn Time. Also on limited-edition 10-inch.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

17 DISCLOSURE BANG THAT

In a departure from the neo-UK garage skitter-beats of 2013's *Settle*, the Lawrence brothers share this tech house banger that wants to see you work that thing, and soon.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

18 YAK PLASTIC PEOPLE

This new London three-piece coven suggest Supergrass had they OD'd on *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* and not *Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneygoround, Part One*.
Find It: *SoundCloud*



19 GIRLPOOL BEFORE THE WORLD WAS BIG

Sharp, penetrating personal insight from LA duo. Bold, basic instrumentation (toy xylophone, guitar) foregrounds a strident yet pretty mesh of their voices.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

20 BILL EVANS BLUE IN GREEN

Midnight moods from 1959's *Portrait In Jazz*. In the absence of Miles Davis's horn (it's also a highlight of *Kind Of Blue*), Evans's piano-led version finds different dimensions of solitary reverie.
Find It: *YouTube*

Alamy (2)

SELFPORTRAIT

DUFF MCKAGAN

The ex-GN'R bass in his own words and by his own hand.

I would describe myself... as pretty easy going. I look on the bright side, and like things to move along quickly, because my life seems to be so quick.

Music changed me... by just being there. I was the youngest in a huge brood of kids, it coloured my whole childhood. I don't know what it was like before music – it was the first thing I remember. I think it was even there when I was in the womb. It was The Beatles, Zeppelin, Sly And The Family Stone. I thought they were all amazing.

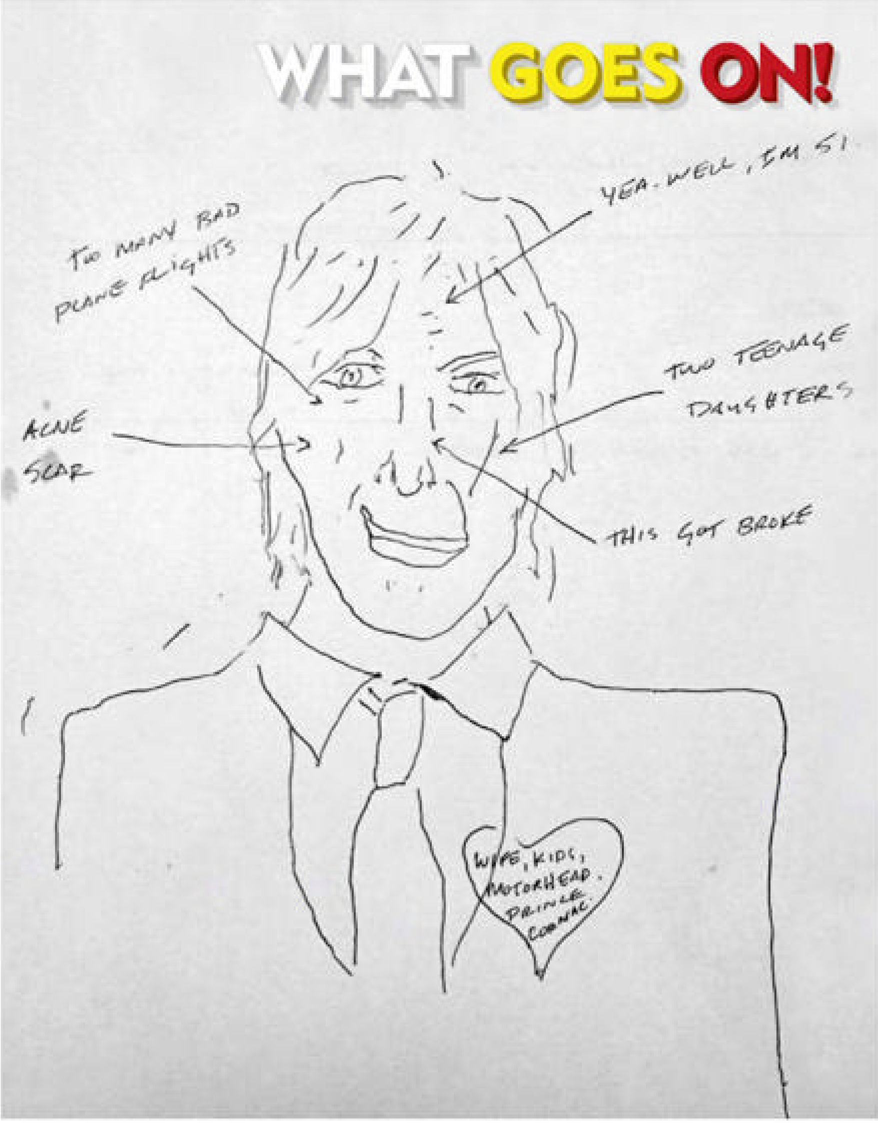
When I'm not making music... I parent, husband, brother, do dishes, be a friend, kick box, mountain climb, take planes a lot, read a ton of books, write, feed dogs. Repeat.

My biggest vice is... my daughters. If my daughter is like, "Dad I really need a ride", when I know she doesn't, she still gets a ride. I'll do anything for them.

The last time I felt embarrassed was... I don't get embarrassed really. I just kind of accept shit now. I did eat part of my coat in 8th grade. I'd been switched to this new school in Seattle, and was in the lunchroom eating a sandwich in my coat. The threads got in the sandwich because it was next to my hand and I kept eating because I didn't want all these new kids to see me pull part of my coat out of my mouth. That was embarrassing! I don't think I've been totally embarrassed since because I've worked on it.

My formal qualifications are... high school dropout, GED, Dean's list and President's list Seattle University Albers School Of Business. Columnist for Seattle Weekly, ESPN, and Playboy.

The last time I cried was... probably a movie. I watched Interstellar on a plane from LA to Buenos Aires – it killed me. I have a daughter who reminded me of the daughter character Murph, and I was [Matthew] McConaughey's character. I texted my daughter when I got to Buenos Aires to tell her, and she was like, "Oh dad". I started crying. Guilty stuff.


TOO MANY BAD PLANE FLIGHTS
YEA. WELL, I'M 51
TWO TEENAGE DAUGHTERS
ACNE SCAR
THIS GOT BROKE
WIFE, KIDS, MOTORHEAD. PRINCE COGNAC

Life lines: Duff McKagan by Duff McKagan.

"I DID EAT PART OF MY COAT IN 8TH GRADE."

Vinyl, CD or MP3... I'm so into vinyl now. Slash and I thought CDs were such a good idea in 1989 – when we'd finally gotten some money we bought CD players for our stereos. We got rid of our turntables. CDs are just dispensable pieces of plastic now, especially with the kids. They think vinyl's really novel.

My most prized possession is... my first bass. I recorded *Appetite For Destruction* on it, right through those first gigs. I still play that thing for every record I do. I can trust an old friend.

The best book I've ever read is... Suttree by Cormac McCarthy.

Is the glass half full or half empty... half full, for sure.

My biggest regret is... regret's strange for me. Instead of having regrets, I just try to take that piece of emptiness, or 'chagrinness', and turn it into a learning experience. I do regret sometimes I'm six-feet three tall, but I can't do anything about it, so I take it as an opportunity... I'm gonna get down with this! Also, a couple of big bands I've been in... I regret they've broken apart. But that's the way it goes.

When we die... I had a water-skiing accident in 7th grade. A rope was wrapped under my arm and I got dragged underwater. I struggled and thought I was going to die. Suddenly I was enveloped in this warmness, and was welcomed to this place with people I knew but never met. When they pulled me back to the surface I was kind of bummed. I haven't been terrified of death since. So I think you go to that warm place when you die.

I'd like to be remembered... with everybody going, "That was the most kick-ass dude ever!" Hopefully, mostly fairly, and as a man of his word.

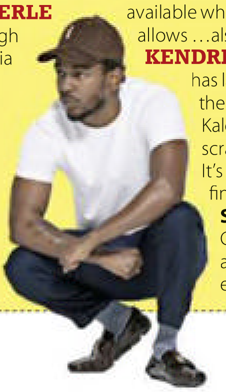
Sam Warner

Duff McKagan's How To Be A Man (And Other Illusions) is published by Da Capo Press

MONDOMOJO

...respect to **FLORENCE WELCH** (right), who didn't break a leg at the Coachella festival in April, but did break her foot. She still played the California bash's second weekend, though, and promised to be mobile again for Glastonbury ...forget the Hatton Garden blag: on April 21 an overwrought fan 'borrowed' a pair of heart-shaped glasses owned by **SIR ELTON JOHN** from the Rock'n'Soul Museum in Memphis. A week later the remorseful tea-leaf told the law where the purloined specs could be found ...a long-promised American Idol-style TV game show entitled **ULTIMATE DJ** is finally happening. But will there be a category for celebs going mental while playing pre-mixed sets off a laptop? ...country legend **MERLE HAGGARD** only went to high school in Bakersfield, California for nine days, in1950. But last month he finally received his diploma. Remember kids, its never too late to stay in school ...simultaneously, Merle's good pal and collaborator **WILLIE NELSON** announced his own marijuana brand, Willie's Reserve, to be available wherever legislation allows ...also diversifying, rapper **KENDRICK LAMAR** (left) has launched his own themed salad, Beets Don't Kale My Vibes, with ethical scran outfit **Sweetpea**. It's not his first green fingers rap he co-wrote **Schoolboy Q**'s Collard Greens in 2013. How's about a responsible eating concept LP?

Scott Uchida



MOJORISING

JACCO GARDNER

Neder baroque-psych voyager plumbs his unconscious and demands connection.

The Shadow Shoppe, the name of Jacco Gardner's studio, conjures up images of late-night psychedelic bacchanalia followed by stoned dawn contemplation.

"Actually, you'd be quite disappointed by the reality," laughs the 26-year-old Dutch multi-instrumentalist of the said Shoppe. Located on an industrial estate on the outskirts of the village of Zwaag, 30 miles north of Amsterdam, , the space was originally bought for Jacco and his two siblings by his father in the hope that they would start their own business there. Instead, Jacco has transformed it into a base in which to hone his own psychedelic vision, the first signs of which emerged on his inspired debut album, 2013's *Cabinet Of Curiosities*.

"I can just do whatever I want whenever I want," he says. "But I do have to pay my parents rent now. That's only fair because I'm sort of making a living as a musician."

Gardner says this with a sense of mild disbelief, having seen his debut lauded around the world for its mix of Syd Barrett-inspired lyrical wonderment and the lush, baroque pop orchestrations reminiscent of Curt Boettcher and, in places, Love. Translating his studio experimentation into the live environment, however, has proved to be a challenge. "I never really saw myself as a performer so I had to get good at that. Then, when I came back from touring, I felt I'd almost become this person I'd created. I had to question whether that was really me. The entire experience changed me," he admits.

Using a tiny USB keyboard to demo ideas on the road, Gardner retreated to the Shoppe, worrying he had writer's block. Then came Brightly, the first song he recorded for his second album *Hypnophobia*, a record he considers to be "darker, more personal." Musically, too, *Hypnophobia* is more textured, its scope broader.

"I had to listen to a lot of music to get inspired again," says Jacco. "I really got into Mort Garson's [1967 album] *The Zodiac*. It's got some great synths on it but some of The Wrecking Crew were on there too. Then I got into his solo stuff, the synth records, and that opened up my world to the German stuff, library music and [soundtrack composers] Ennio Morricone, Piero Umiliani and François de Roubaix: music that had the same drama that I had always loved."

A deep and considered thinker, Gardner sees *Hypnophobia* as a liberating experience. "There are so many mysteries still around us, I want to describe through music," he concludes, explaining that his next project may be to create an immersive psychedelic experience. "I'm fascinated by the unconscious world which we can't control and it feels like I've just started to really understand that world." Gardner's trip, it seems, is only beginning.

Phil Alexander

Hypnophobia is out now on Full Time Hobby

The constant Gardner: Jacco relaxes beneath his spin-painted medicine cabinet of curiosities.

Nick Helderman

"THERE ARE SO MANY MYSTERIES STILL AROUND US..."

HYPNOPHOBIA

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Syd Barrett, Donovan, Tame Impala
- Much of Jacco Gardner's second album, *Hypnophobia*, was recorded at night. "I'm fascinated with the dark. Even happy songs come out of the darkness," he says.
- Gardner describes the current wave of psychedelia as a reaction to "the disappointment with the modern world. People used to dream a lot more..."

KEY TRACKS

- Find Yourself
- Hypnophobia
- Outside Forever

MINDBLOWERS!

LONELADY

The dance-pop haunter of *Hinterland* selects tracks for jarring and transport.

1 NICO INTO THE ARENA

(From Camera Obscura, Beggars Banquet, 1985)

"Much of what is written about Nico's in a Velvet Underground context; but I feel she only becomes her true self, finds her own artistic voice, after VU, and this is where the really interesting stuff lies. I love the notion that at some point she acquired a harmonium and just taught herself to play it. The results are austerely magical and compelling. I could easily have chosen anything off *Marble Index*, but this is from a later album; with her Gregorian chant-style vocal there's a sense of something ancient reaching across time, coupled with strange, sudden interjections of synth and brass, the interweaving of icy medieval temperatures with almost hip hop-sounding percussive and sample-type elements. It makes for a unique-sounding song."

2 PINK INDUSTRY NEW BEGINNINGS

(Zulu LP, 1985)

"I haven't seen much 'out there' about Pink Industry, who were from Liverpool. I can't remember how I found them either, or imagery of them, which adds to their unreachable-ness. Their first LP's called *Low Technology*, and I think this perfectly describes their sound – from a minimal set up they create this grainy, smeary, miasma of wonky electronics, beats and samples with a bass that's often played deceptively sweetly or will suddenly explode into funk/slap bass. It makes for quite a jarring and evocative soundscape, which I love."

ARVO PÄRT
ALINA

3 ARVO PÄRT SPIEGEL IM SPIEGEL

(From Alina, ECM, 1999)

"It translates as 'mirror in mirror', suggesting infinity. One of the most ineffably sweet and sad pieces I've ever heard. Fills me with grief, for what I don't know, maybe something to do with how inexplicable, chaotic, brutal and beautiful existence is. I might have first heard this piece in a documentary about the Seagram murals by Rothko; even if that's not true, the two things co-exist in my mind. Simon Schama's quote about Rothko's murals could be applied to Spiegel Im Spiegel, and maybe about any great piece of art; "it's a gateway… towards a space that might be where we came from or where we will end up.'"

ISOLATION WARD
POINT FINAL

4 ISOLATION WARD TRY AGAIN

(From Point Final, LTM, 2009)

"They're a Belgian band, formed in 1980. I first heard a song of theirs on a Belgian cold wave compilation which prompted me to explore further. Their album *Point Final* conjures the damp freezing rehearsal spaces I know so well. I often can't understand the vocal so it just becomes part of the instrumentation, and I like its plaintive quality. This song just has that redemptive, yearning, illumination-from-within feel I love. In their relatively short lifespan – they split in 1983 – I think they captured an atmosphere, from a sort of mirror city of Manchester."

CABARET VOLTAIRE
ARCHIVE
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5 CABARET VOLTAIRE GUT LEVEL

(From Archive #828285 Live, Intone, 2013)

"I could have chosen any song, but I've chosen this live performance from Sheffield Lyceum in 1982 'cos I like the sense of swirling aggression bouncing off the dark walls and occasional cryptic, gruff vocals – 'G.U.T. you!' – assaulting the audience. I love the idea of Western Works, their HQ/recording studio, keeping the creative control hermetic and in-house. It's an approach I prefer myself. Their use of visuals is just as impressive – dynamic, Super 8 kaleidoscopes of reportage, God knows what, nightmares. Theirs is an innovative and brilliant body of work, from menacing collages of totalitarian fears to dance music with choruses and hooks. I would love to have been at a CV gig, to be immersed in their sound and vision."

LoneLady on the Isolation Ward: "damp freezing rehearsal spaces I know so well."

Fool runnings: William Royce 'Boz' Scaggs, exhibiting star quality in the '70s.

Rex Features, Karl Albinsson

ROCK'N'ROLL CONFIDENTIAL

BOZ SCAGGS

The blue-eyed soul doyen on *Silk Degrees*, dynamic performance and making wine, spo-dee-o-dee.

He'd left home in Texas after graduating from university in Wisconsin, and arrived in London in the '60s to study film. But music had claimed him in high school, along with friend Steve Miller, and in Europe it pulled him in again and changed his path forever. He returned to San Francisco, hitched up with Miller to record 1968's *Children Of The Future* and *Sailor*, and then quit The Steve Miller Band to make his own music. 1969's *Boz Scaggs*, with a stunning 12-minute Loan Me A Dime crowned by an extraordinary Duane Allman guitar solo, began a solo career that's consistently delivered strong R&B/soul-rooted sounds, commercially peaking with 1976's big-selling *Silk Degrees*. Absent from music in the '80s, he's now fully re-engaged and touring regularly in the States, with latest album *A Fool To Care* arriving just two years after *Memphis*.

On *A Fool To Care* you've crossed Tennessee, Memphis to Nashville.

The take-away from the *Memphis* album was we had a really great rhythm section. If we were going to stay in the States we were probably going to want to work in New York, Nashville or Los Angeles. We had the option of using some terrific players in Nashville, and [producer Steve] Jordan had worked in that studio.

The song Hell To Pay has a political and environmental weight.

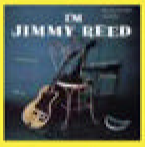
I have this voice that lives inside of me that sounds like a cantankerous Southern old man that I used before in an album I did a dozen years ago called *Dig* on the song On The Natch. I called on that voice again… or that voice appeared to me. The lyric comes from bits of jottings I've made over time around the Hell To Pay theme.

Unusually, you also covered a song by a British writer, Richard Hawley.

My son turned me on to Richard Hawley's music and I just went deeply into his work. I had six or seven Richard Hawley songs in hand to record. When we got into the sessions we called Paul Franklin, a remarkable steel guitar player, and I thought his style might really give another great reading on Storm A Comin'.

At our first interview, back in 1976, you said you'd wanted to record *Silk Degrees* in London with David Bowie's producer, Ken Scott.

I had forgotten about that. His sounds fascinated me. I had visited that studio, saw that console, I was really into that sound. I'd had experience working with Glyn Johns in London [on the Miller Band LPs and two solo albums]. There's this approach I take when I'm in London. It's an exciting, sort of a sizzling place to be, very stimulating. [But] The section I worked with in Los Angeles had very



SCAGGS' GROOVES

Boz opens his musical bag.

1 Jimmy Reed *I'm Jimmy Reed* (VEE-JAY, 1961)

2 Marvin Gaye *What's Going On* (TAMLA, 1971)

3 Miles Davis *Kind Of Blue* (COLUMBIA, 1959)

4 Jim Beard *Advocate* (CD BABY, 1999)

5 Shirley Horn *Here's To Life* (VERVE, 1992) similar sonic ideas and the producer, Joe Wissert, shared my enthusiasm for that approach. We put that into *Silk Degrees*.

On the LP before that, *Slow Dancer*, producer Johnny Bristol helped you to sing slightly differently.

I'd never been produced, as a vocalist, by anyone. Johnny Bristol coaxed more of emotional content out of my performance than anybody had ever done. He was a singer, he would get on the microphone, and coming out of Motown, the producer was very, very responsible for getting the most dynamic performance out of his artist.

After 1980's *Middle Man*, there are long gaps between your releases.

If I can categorise it, the first half of the '70s I had my own band and worked out my own style, the latter half was my 'Hollywood' music, I call them, starting with *Silk Degrees* and ending with *Middle Man*. The '80s I sat out apart from a final album I made for Columbia. The '90s I think of as the beginning of part two of my musical career. I started drifting back. I got a call from Donald Fagen to join the New York Rock'n'Soul Revue. It was wonderful, and drew me to sign with Virgin Records, which culminated in an album around 2000, *Dig*, which I consider the best record I ever made. About six years ago I started touring more than at any time in my career, and I worked with Donald Fagen and Michael McDonald on a project, The Dukes Of September, and the last two records I've explored just what I think is very, very interesting music.

Why did you open Slim's, the 'Frisco club that's still going?

That was in the late '80s when I was just not doing music. Bill Graham had had a club called Wolfgang's, which had a capacity of about 600 or 700, all live music, and it had been burned down [1987] and there was no venue in San Francisco that you could feature artists of a certain stature. I had a friend in the restaurant/bar business and we found a warehouse in San Francisco with real cheap rent that we could have music in. It was not intended to be an on-going club.

And the Scaggs Vineyard?

My wife and I found some property for a getaway, a cottage in the countryside outside San Francisco. It was raw wilderness. We started building the cottage, planting trees. A friend had some vines left from a planting and put them in for us. It's a hobby we became passionate about.

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before…

(*Long pause*) The mind reels… I'm stumped. Would you leave your e-mail address? Er, I'd like to have continued studying the cello when I was a kid.

Geoff Brown

Boz Scaggs' A Fool To Care is out on 429

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

SHAUN RYDER

The X-man hails Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures*.

To be perfectly Manc: Shaun William Ryder (below) hovers above an image of the radio waves from pulsar CP 1919, aka Peter Saville's *Unknown Pleasures* sleeve (bottom).

“WE COVERED MOST OF THE TRACKS AT OUR FIRST PROPER GIG, AT A YOUTH CLUB.”

"I'd always loved pop music. I had Beatles records when I was five, I saw Bowie on Top Of The Pops in 1972 as a fucking 10-year-old. What got me into wanting to actually do music was watching Stardust with David Essex; the whole thing was on the screen, which was, 'I want to shag loads of birds, take drugs and play pop music.'

In 1979 I'd not even listened to Velvet Underground yet. I was into punk, Motown, Buzzcocks, fucking all sorts of shit, a chart-head, really. Then I heard *Unknown Pleasures*. Nothing got in the charts off this.

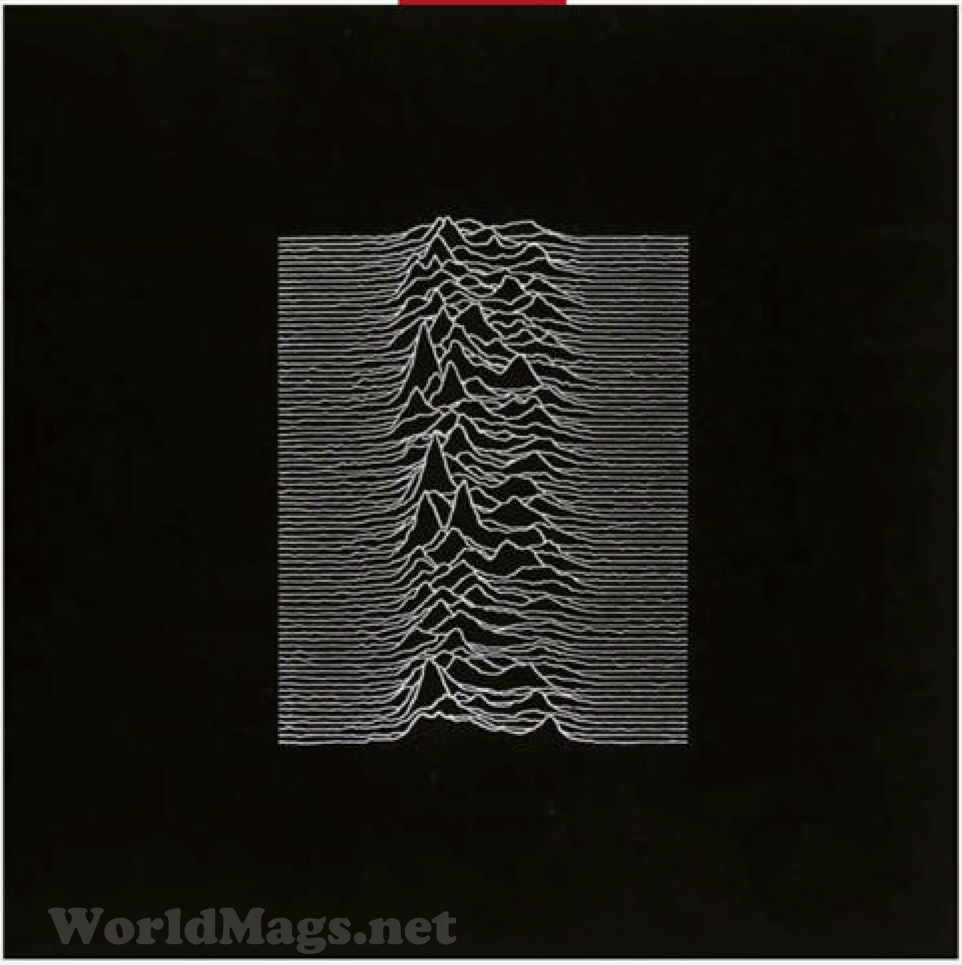
I can't remember when I first heard it. The cover was mega, and the sound was moody and electronic, the drummer sounded like a machine. The lyrics, I had to keep stopping the record to write the lyrics out to get to know what the fuck he was on about, and never really knowing. But it was what it meant to me – stuff that I write, I like people to have their own meanings about it. Shadowplay, brilliant. New Dawn Fades, fuckin' love it. And Bernard [Sumner], what an inventive fucking guitar player. Really simple, but just fucking great riffs.

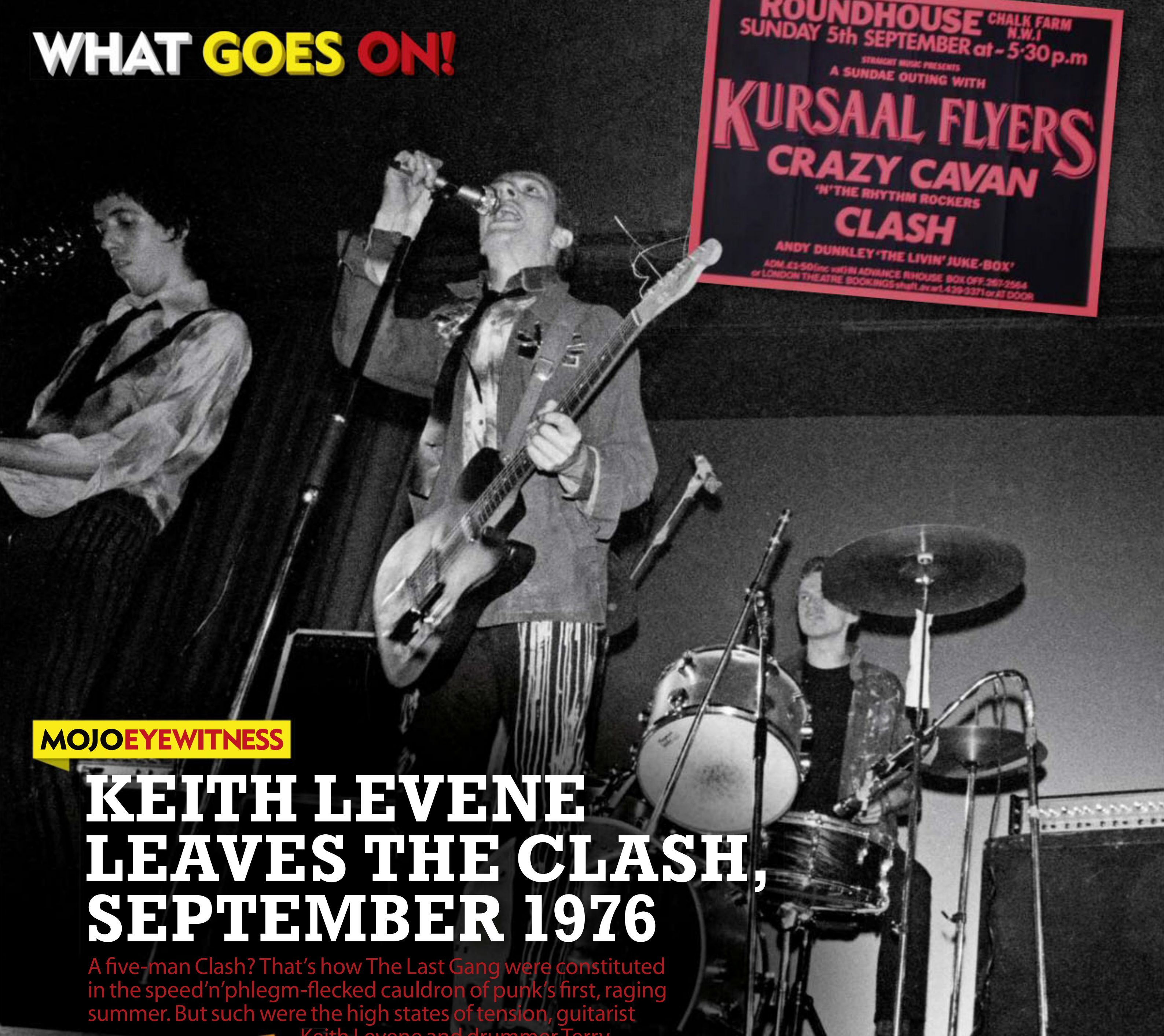
I never saw them live. But when I saw pictures of them, they all had side partings and dressed like we did on the street, like a bunch of Perry Boys, a bunch of casuals. As far as we were concerned, they was the boys. It fed into the Mondays, yeah. When we first started off, we played, or tried to, most of the tracks off both Joy Division albums at our first proper gig, at a youth club. I was putting on his voice as well, (*sings Transmission in convincing Ian Curtis baritone*). It led me onto the whole Factory thing, and I started creeping along to get involved with that.

It was great working with [Joy Division producer] Martin [Hannett] on [1988 Happy Mondays LP] *Bummed*. I might've said, 'Fuckin' 'ell, great albums,' but I didn't talk to him about it, ever. I've met everyone involved with it except for Ian and I've never said anything to anyone, it's not what I do. It's still fucking great, though, and I can understand why young kids at uni or whatever become Joy Division fans. Was there a theme? Death? Depression? I don't fucking know."

Ian Harrison

Black Grape's Comeback Tour begins at the Glasgow Garage on June 3. See blackgrapeofficial.com for info





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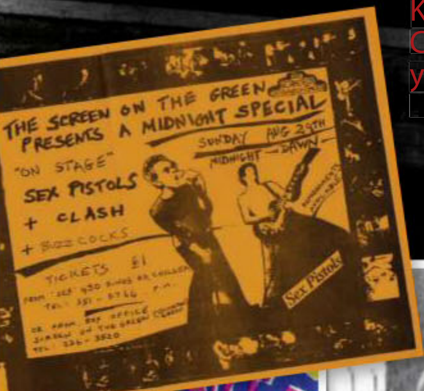
MOJO EYEWITNESS

KEITH LEVENE LEAVES THE CLASH, SEPTEMBER 1976

A five-man Clash? That's how The Last Gang were constituted in the speed'n'phlegm-flecked cauldron of punk's first, raging summer. But such were the high states of tension, guitarist Keith Levene and drummer Terry Chimes would both leave within the year. Here they recall the hate and r that drove them out.



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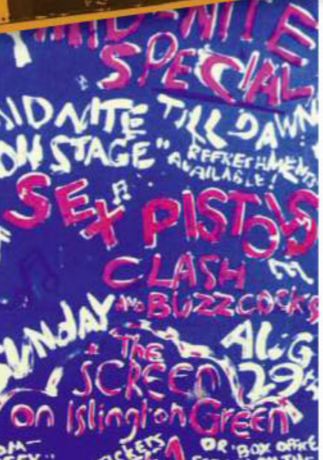
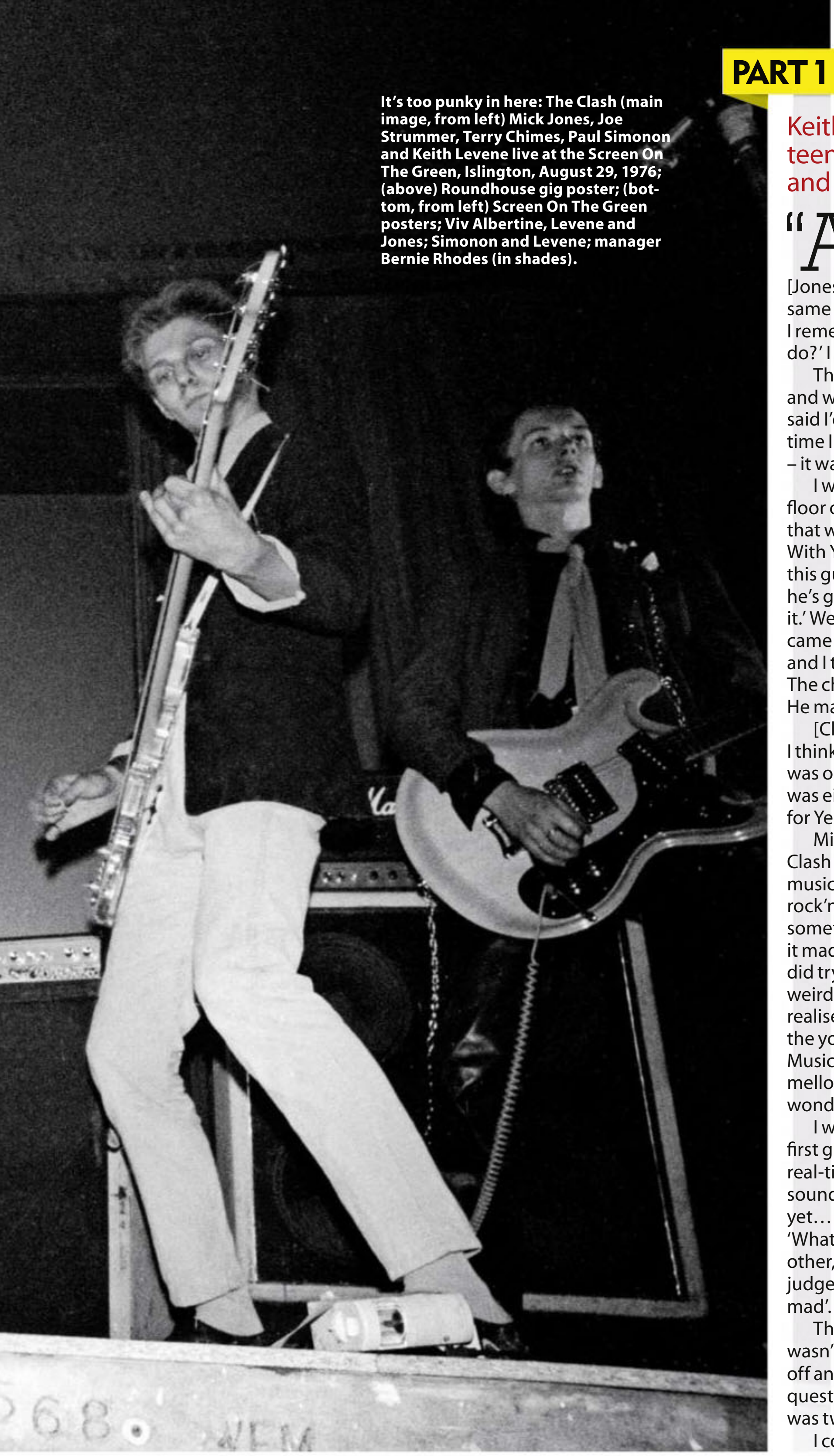


SPECIAL
MIDNITE TILL DAWN
"ON STAGE"
REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE!
SEX PISTOLS
CLASH
AND BUZZCOCKS
SUNDAY AUG 29th
The SCREEN on Islington Green
OR BOX OFFICE

"MUSICALLY, I WAS WAY AHEAD OF THEM... I KNEW I WAS PUTTING OUT A MOOD."



It's too punky in here: The Clash (main image, from left) Mick Jones, Joe Strummer, Terry Chimes, Paul Simonon and Keith Levene live at the Screen On The Green, Islington, August 29, 1976; (above) Roundhouse gig poster; (bottom, from left) Screen On The Green posters; Viv Albertine, Levene and Jones; Simonon and Levene; manager Bernie Rhodes (in shades).

PART 1 "GET A GREAT BAND TOGETHER."

Keith Levene recalls maverick punk teendom, spontaneous composition and loving Joe Strummer.

"Around the time of the first Pistols gig at the Nashville [in March 1976], my mate Alan Drake introduced me to this guy 'Rock'n'roll Mick' [Jones], and he was great, I loved him. We were into the same music – well, maybe not Yes – but all the other stuff. I remember he said, 'Keith, what do you really want to do?' I said, Get a really fucking great band together.

The next weekend he invited me to Portobello Road, and we ended up at another mate Barry Jones's place. I said I'd play bass; Mick assumed I was a bass player. Next time I saw him I'd cut my hair, I wasn't wearing stack heels – it was probably a month later but it seemed like a year.

I went up to his gran's flat in Royal Oak [on the 18th floor of Wilmcote House] and we played electric guitars that weren't plugged in, doing songs like I'm So Bored With You and Protex Blue. Then one day he said, 'I've met this guy Paul [Simonon], he sounds thick but he isn't, and he's gonna play bass. The only thing is I need to teach him it.' We had a singer called Billy Watts, and Terry Chimes came and then left. Terry was a fine young man, very nice, and I think at one point Mick wanted an ill-educated thug. The cherry on the top, though, was finding Joe Strummer. He made The Clash happen, he was a great frontman.

[Clash manager] Bernie [Rhodes] was challenging, but I think he found me interesting, because even though I was only 18 I knew a lot of stuff. I'd been working since I was eight or nine – my dad had a factory – and I'd roadie'd for Yes; I used to play snooker in clubs for money, too.

Mick teaching Paul bass was a defining moment in The Clash and the point I became an outsider. It defined the musical dimensions of the band: Mick was showing him rock'n'roll bass lines, whereas I would have perhaps tried something different. It wasn't a good or bad thing – in fact it made sense – but it set the group on a certain path. We did try out a few of my tunes when Mick wasn't around; weird, Eno-esque stuff. Joe was very open to it, but I realised that they weren't getting their heads around it. As the youngest, I didn't have the confidence to push it. Musically, I was way ahead of them, I knew about mellotrons, Yes and classical rock, but I recognised the wonderful simplicity of Buddy Holly too.

I wrote [*The Clash* track] What's My Name at the group's first gig at the Black Swan in Sheffield [July 4, 1976]. I'm a real-time composer and came up with that song at the soundcheck. Joe said, 'What's that?' I said, I don't know yet… Then I did the intro bit and Joe started singing, 'What the hell is wrong with you…' Me and Joe loved each other, and he came up with all these lines about me – 'the judge didn't know your name' and 'drives you fucking mad'. It wasn't a social thing, it was a little bit about me!

That was the same gig when it was clear John [Lydon] wasn't happy with the Pistols. He was looking very pissed off and very Johnny Rotten, and that's when I popped the question about us doing something together – though it was two years before PiL eventually happened.

I could have kept my mouth shut and played along, but I wasn't happy. I knew I was putting out a mood. Things changed between me and Mick, there was conflict. We agreed to disagree, and I said I'd play some more gigs – I mean, who wouldn't want to play the Roundhouse with Patti Smith? You can hear my guitar playing on the Screen On The Green [bootleg]; I always thought the sound was a turgid mess, but it didn't matter because it wasn't about the music. I wasn't up there trying to be Yes, it was sticking two fingers up at what had gone before.

The reason I left [in September '76] was because I wanted to move on. Was I taking more speed than the others? No, that's a myth. Everybody was doing everything, that has nothing to do with it."

Keith Levene's book I Was A Teenage Guitarist 4 The Clash and album CZ2014 are available from www.teenageguitarist76.com

TURN OVER! DRUMMER TERRY CHIMES RECALLS ETHICAL SCHISMS AND OTHER STROPPY CUSTOMERS…

Ray Stevenson/Rex, Camera Press/Caroline Coon, Cindy Stern, Courtesy Viv Albertine, Tracks Images

PART 2 "THEY WERE ALL FROM BROKEN HOMES"

LEVENE LEAVES THE CLASH, SEPT 1976

Drummer Terry Chimes on explosions of anger, riots and E-Type Jags.

"I went to a couple of London SS auditions in Paddington, Mick Jones was there with Tony James and Brian James. At another, at Riverside Studios in Hammersmith, this guy Billy Watts was singing, a real character. It sounded more like a band by then, Paul was on bass. When I was asked back again, Joe had arrived. He didn't sound like a bloke in a rock'n'roll band. My mum said when the first album came out, 'The singer can't sing but the drums are *marvellous*!' (*Laughs*)

Bernie then told me I'd passed the audition, but Tony and Brian hadn't. He thought [James's group] The Damned were the worst band in the world. I was a bit stroppy in those days, and they liked being argued with.

We spent a lot of time doing up Rehearsal Rehearsals in Camden, we were there 24/7. It was an intense time, and I realised when I was writing my book [The Strange Case Of Dr Terry & Mr Chimes; Wilkinson, 2014] why I left: they were all from broken homes, the band, management, roadies – whereas I was from a loving home. I thought the world was a nice place, and they saw it as a bad place. They'd go on about society breaking down with riots and I'd say, There have always been riots, there have always been people smashing things up.

Keith was the stroppiest. If you put him in a room with himself, he'd still have an argument. Joe told a story about Keith complaining about his milkshake in McDonald's; he thought Keith was right and we should be less complacent and accepting. Paul was easy-going, he'd always be on time.

Joe called Keith 'Phantom The Guitar Player', because he came and went as he wanted. Then one day he said, 'Do we need three guitarists?', and I remember Mick saying, 'Shall we get rid of him?' Joe said, 'Yeah' and Paul said, 'I agree.' It came out of nowhere. But they were right, it sounded better without him, there was more room. He still looked a bit miffed when he was asked to leave.

They wanna be your boyfriends: (bottom) Clash/Ramones summit outside Dingwalls, north London, July 5, 1976 (from left) Levene pal Stuart Keen, Tommy and Dee Dee Ramone, Levene, Simonon and Johnny Ramone; (right) The Clash live (with Terry 'Tory Crimes' on drums); (below, left) back cover of 1977's *The Clash* album records Levene's and Chimes' contributions.

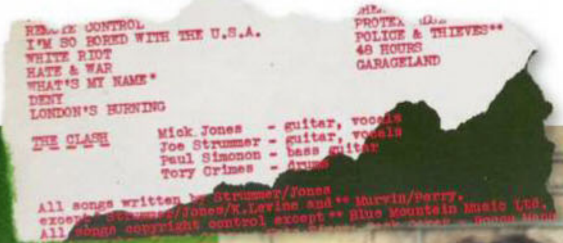
"KEITH WAS THE STROPPIEST… PUT HIM IN A ROOM WITH HIMSELF, HE'D STILL HAVE AN ARGUMENT."

With all the anger and arguing, it became wearing, which is why I left. It was that explosion of anger that made The Clash good, but it wasn't for me. Keith's job was to do the lead guitar bits, so when he left Mick said, 'I better learn how to play the guitar.' It was a bit less cluttered after that.

I left soon after Keith. I wanted to be in a band that didn't argue and made money. I didn't squat, I had a car, I always stood on my own two feet. I came back to drum on the first Clash album, but that was temporary; Joe said he'd buy me an E-Type Jag from his advance if I stayed and Bernie phoned my dad to persuade me not to leave – a very interesting conversation to overhear!"

Pat Gilbert

Terry's punk supergroup The Crunch's LP Brand New Brand is out now on Virtus Sweden



I'M SO BORED WITH THE U.S.A.
WHITE RIOT
HATE & WAR
WHAT'S MY NAME*
DENY
LONDON'S BURNING

POLICE & THIEVES**
48 HOURS
GARAGELAND

THE CLASH
Mick Jones - guitar, vocals
Joe Strummer - guitar, vocals
Paul Simonon - bass guitar
Tory Crimes - drums

All songs written by Strummer/Jones
except * Strummer/Jones/K.Levine and ** Murvin/Perry.
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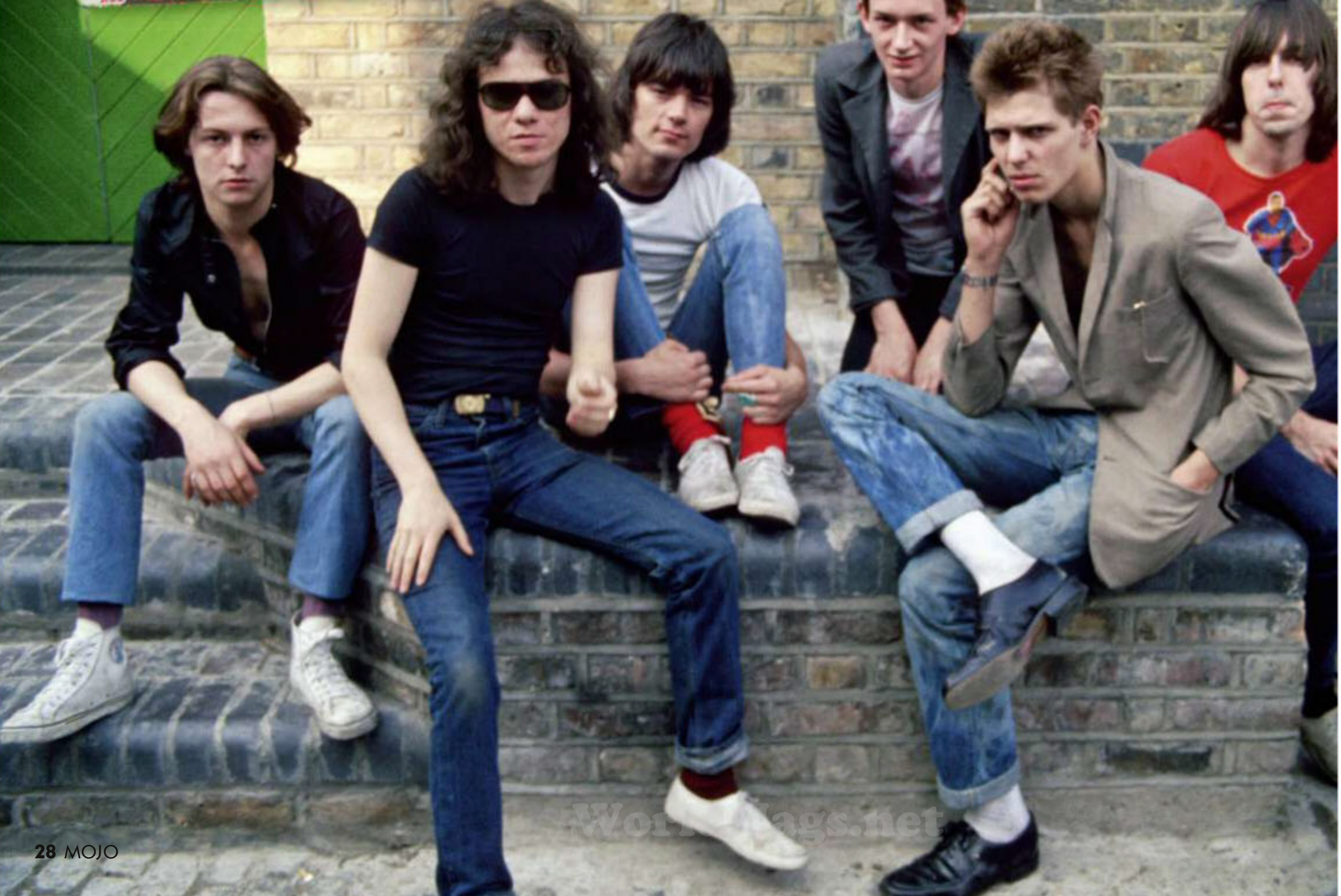


Danny Fields, Joe Stevens

MOJORISING

LEON BRIDGES

Time-slipping Texan soul voice brings his vision to life.

Hats entertainment: Fort Worth bluesman Leon Bridges.

While most people visiting the Fort Worth branch of office suppliers Staples last December probably just needed envelopes or boxes for last-minute Christmas presents, Leon Bridges' visit was somewhat more life changing.

That Yuletide, he made use of the stationery giant's 'Office On The Go' facilities to sign and fax back a contract to Columbia Records. When he left the store he was Bob Dylan's labelmate. "I was thinking about that on the way home," laughs the quietly spoken 26-year-old. "It felt like a dream, I didn't really know what to make of it! We did have some champagne afterwards though, for sure."

Staples isn't his only incongruous haunt. An artificial putting green, for example, proved the best place to capture the soaring yet characterful vocals that have already seen him favourably compared with some of soul's biggest voices. "There's a Fort Worth bar called Shipping And Receiving in the same building where they used to test golf clubs," he laughs in his light Texan drawl. "So we recorded on a putting green and made some soul music on it."

The swinging choice of location was down to the album being recorded before any label was involved, he continues. "We didn't have any money, so we did it with my friends, showing them the songs before the sessions, just going at it and seeing what happened." One of those pals was White Denim's Austin Jenkins, who got in touch after Bridges switched his focus from training as a choreographer and instead gained a reputation on the Texan open-mike circuit.

> **"WE RECORDED ON A PUTTING GREEN AND MADE SOME SOUL MUSIC ON IT."**

"I needed someone to come in and fine tune and polish what I was doing, that's definitely what Austin and the other Fort Worth guys did," Bridges explains. "They helped my vision come to life. It was a very collaborative thing. I couldn't do it by myself." The results are debut album *Coming Home* (released June 22). A collection of intimate songs rich in the imagery of the American south, they boast an enveloping, yet appealingly scuffed, soul sound.

This has seen the singer nicknamed 'The Truth' in his home state, but as Bridges is keen to point out, while acknowledging his inspirations, the approach is his own. "Before I'd made the decision to pursue this classic sound, I'd written this song about my mother called Lisa Sawyer, a little progression on guitar," he recalls. "Somebody asked me if Sam Cooke was one of my inspirations and I felt bad because I'd never listened to his music. After that I did some digging."

Musical archaeology over, success for Bridges looks if not nailed, then certainly stapled on.

Paul Stokes

LEON BRIDGES

FACT SHEET

- For Fans Of: Sam Cooke, Al Green, Amy Winehouse, White Denim, Nick Waterhouse.
- Before releasing a note of music, Bridges became an Instagram star, thanks to a continuing series of black & white shots, taken in collaboration with "best friend", the photographer Erin Rambo.
- Bridges only got his first passport so he could play UK dates in March. Despite a car crash involving his taxi while in London, he enjoyed the trip.

KEY TRACKS

- Better Man
- Smooth Sailin'
- Twistin' And Groovin'

ALSORISING

Creators of, "psychedelic Kraut-lullabies", Malmö trio **DEATH AND VANILLA** are named after pet rabbits of their acquaintance, one black, one white. Duly attuned to the hexen potential of bunnies, their second album *To Where The Wild Things Are* channels Broadcast and Delia Derbyshire eeriness, though multi-instrumentalist **Anders Hansson** says '70s cult film Picnic At Hanging Rock is as important. D&V have also recorded their own soundtrack, to Carl Theodor Dreyer's '30s classic Vampyr. "Eerie means scary, yes?" says vocalist/ keyboardist **Marleen Nilsson**. "More mysterious," counters Hansson. "We are interested in duality," agrees Nilsson. "All the things you can find in between." *MA*

Like waking up with a spider's web tattoo'd on your face, **KING GIZZARD & THE WIZARD LIZARD** is surely a name destined for regret, yet these seven merry pranksters from Melbourne have the psych-rock trousers to carry it off. Their 15-minute 12-inch on Heavenly, 2013's Head On/Pill, and the first half of last year's *I'm In Your Mind Fuzz* long-player, were as brain-busting and revelatory as any freakbeat this side of early Super Furry Animals. Now, the all-new album *Quarters* packs a more meditative groove across four blissful 10-minute cuts. "I wanted to make a record where I didn't have to use any brutal guitar pedals or yell through blown-out guitar amps", muses Gizzard mainman **Stu Mackenzie** (third from right). *AP*

THE SEARCH FOR THE NEW GUITAR STAR

Sky Art's new show, Guitar Star aims to uncover The Next Big Thing

Finally guitarists have a next-big-thing TV talent show of their own. Guitar Star, which launches on the new Sky Arts on the 9th June, is the nationwide search for a new guitar hero.

With the auditions and mentoring having begun in April Edith Bowman now hosts the competition which covers a range of genres - rock, acoustic, classical and jazz - with the help of experts Nitin Sawhney, Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi, classical guitarist Helen Sanderson and Fun Lovin' Criminals Huey Morgan. The winner will get to perform at Latitude Festival this summer where they'll appear alongside the likes of Alt-J, Noel Gallagher and The Vaccines.

Here Tony, Edith and Huey talk about the guitar stars that influenced them..

TONY IOMMI

How Sabbath's guitar maestro lost a couple of fingertips but discovered jazz great Django.

The noisome riff-maker with metal flagbearers Black Sabbath first discovered Django Reinhardt after an injury in a sheet metal factory. Before Black Sabbath's emergence, Iommi lost the tips of two fingers and once considered quitting music for good; doctors believed he'd never be able to play again. But learning that a similar fate had once been suffered by the jazz guitarist later proved inspirational.

"The manager from the factory brought in an EP of his," says Iommi. "He said, 'Just listen, he plays with two fingers – his other two are paralysed.' I was pretty down at the time, but I remember thinking, Bloody hell, he's great! It really inspired me. It's funny because I get the same thing now – I've inspired people who have since done the same thing as me. It's good to be able to help people, because going through that is devastating.

"Django was unique, though. The vibrato he put on, and the unusual runs – they weren't run-of-the-mill; he had completely his own style, and only he played like that. There are a few people that now play similar sort of things to him, they'll do a Django-style set, but he was the one that started all that.

"He was a big influence on my style of playing, he was more of an inspiration – he got me to pick up the guitar again. If only I could play like that I'd be a happy man, because it was amazing what he could on a guitar with his two fingers, just fantastic. Without him I don't think I would've had the strength to push on."

EDITH BOWMAN

Spellbinding and stylistically varied Jeff Buckley performances entrance the Radio 1 presenter and DJ.

The Radio 1 presenter knows a thing or two about guitarists: as a familiar face during the Beeb's Glastonbury festival coverage, she has witnessed the likes of Jack White and Neil Young performing on the Pyramid Stage, though she picks folky singer-songwriter, Jeff Buckley as her Guitar Hero.

"It's a bit leftfield," she says. "When I first heard him the guitars spoke to me – they were an extension of the narrative of the song, and the music, and the emotion he's trying to convey through the lyrics. I think it's impossible to pigeonhole him into a genre of guitar playing – there are so many styles across his album, *Grace*.

"The way his voice warbles, and his guitar comes in and compliments that sound – he was brilliant. He's been very influential, too. You can still hear people – not copy him – but emulate him. It's the subtleties that he had. When you listen to him on record it sounds live. It doesn't have that pristine, polished sound to it. It's got a raw, authentic tone.

"I came to him quite late. It was around the time when I came to London, which was about 20 years ago. I never saw him live. But I went through a really weird, obsessive mourning stage with him. (When he died, in 1997) Jeff Buckley was all I listened to, I read everything on him and I watched everything. I even have the album cover framed in my office at home.

"I had discovered him and then I'd realised I wouldn't be able to get any more – it made me hold him dearer."

HUEY MORGAN

When Chic's Nile Rodgers gave the Fun Lovin' Criminal permission not to play too much and a little savoir faire.

The front man with US rock trio, Fun Lovin' Criminals picks out disco guitarist and Chic leader, Nile Rodgers as his favourite. "Aside from being an amazing guitarist, he's also an amazing producer," says Huey Morgan. "He's an amazing musical dude, who's one of the most positive people I've ever met.

"He told me that guitar players need to know when to stop – most of them are jerking off: they play, play, play until they pop. He said, 'Take it easy, man – you need to learn when not to play.'

"What he has is a sensibility," Huey says. "With Fun Lovin' Criminals, all our music is different, it spans a lot of different genres. As a guitar player in a band, I had to learn to play all different styles of music. He actually helped me out on that when I was growing up – I used to listen to Chic, I used to like what he was doing… He was keeping that alive.

"I grew up in the Lower Eastside, Manhattan – it was hip hop, it was salsa, a little Led Zeppelin and all these crazy guitar players. Then I heard the Chic record, *C'est Chic* and there was a guitar solo track called Savoir Faire and I thought, 'Damn, this guy can really play!' He was articulate, he had a really good touch. You knew he could go out there and rip it.'

Guitar Star starts 9th June at 8pm on Sky Arts

REBORN

The new Sky Arts launches on 9th June (Sky channel 121) with live performances across the weekend, interviews and music documentaries that explore some of music's greatest talents. Sky Arts will also be showing coverage from some of this summer's biggest festivals – The Isle of Wight, Latitude, Download and The Cambridge Folk Festival.

sky ARTS

ONTHE ROAD

NORSE LATITUDES

“Turbo-charged Agnetha”/ EDM-goth Susanne Sundfør hits Copenhagen and Stockholm, talks opera, ciggies and not smiling.

A poster outside Copenhagen’s Pumpehuset promises an abyss of black metal, the speciality of Denmark’s Scandinavian neighbour Norway. Cryptopsy and Defilementory played here in February; Goatwhore followed in April. Is MOJO *really* at the right venue?

It turns out that there are two spaces at this former 19th century pump station, and alternative Norwegian export Susanne Sundfør can be found in the 600-capacity main hall. Metal punters who may have mistakenly wandered in would still have discovered something fearless and committed about the night’s entertainment. Sundfør’s uniquely slanted mélange might be summarised as ‘black EDM singer-songwriter opera’, a mix of pop euphoria and emotional foreboding tied to heavy banks of electronics. Live, it can rise to industrial levels of bleed, bathed in backlighting that keeps the faces of the singer and her three-piece band cloaked in semi-darkness and dry ice. Her voice, ecstatic and imperious, cuts through and rises above, the result of opera training through her teens.

“The trick with opera singing is to be louder than the orchestra,” Sundfør declares backstage after soundcheck and a birthday supper (she’s 29 today). “And it needs to be loud on-stage, because it suits the music I make. Some tracks in the set are mellow, but it’s cool to then go somewhere dramatic and violent.”

This winter’s MOJO-praised *Ten Love Songs* album – her third Number 1 in Norway, but only her second album released worldwide following 2012’s *The Silicon Veil* – follows this same variable trajectory. Yet in person, she’s anything but a diva. A thoughtful presence, outside the Pumpehuset Sundfør seems uncomfortable interacting with autograph seekers, and dislikes photo duties and requests to smile, a bit.

“It’s a gender thing,” she explains. “Photographers don’t usually ask guys to smile. But why should I? Isn’t it better to look natural?”

A disciplinarian from an early age, Sundfør embraced opera once she’d disposed of her Spice Girls mania and weakness for Whitney/Celine belters. Yet opera, she says, didn’t mirror what was inside. By 2007’s self-titled album, she was channelling a cool Nordic take on her adored Joni Mitchell. The late Norwegian jazz singer Radka Toneff was another “profound influence”, Sundfør claims.

House of the rising Sundfør: (main) Susanne on-stage at the Kägelbanan, Stockholm; (above left) the Pumpehuset, Copenhagen; (below) pre-show in Sweden.

> “SOME TRACKS ARE MELLOW, BUT IT’S COOL TO THEN GO SOMEWHERE DRAMATIC AND IOLENT.”

“She wasn’t technical but in a way she taught me how to sing, emotionally, to make it personal. But I use my training to get the feel I want.”

How does she care for such a precious instrument?

“Well, I used to smoke a lot,” she laughs (she now suffices with chewing tobacco). “I just drink a lot of water…”

Introduced by thudding tom rolls, the surging, complex momentum of tonight’s opening It’s All Gone Tomorrow, from 2010’s *The Brothel*, shows the distance travelled since her folky debut. Next song Kamikaze, a *Ten Love Songs* highlight, reveals exactly where she is now: a tranquil build-up to a tune deserving of the description ‘banger’ – Euro-house don Avicii would be proud of it. Despite occasional tints of Kate Bush, Donna Summer, even Barbra Streisand, Sundfør’s voice most recalls the pure, piercing melancholia of Abba’s Agnetha Fältskog – albeit a turbo-charged version. Terrific backing vocalist/ keyboardist Gunhild Kristoffersen, the brunette Anni-Frid to Susanne’s blonde Agnetha, helps bring alive *Ten Love Songs*’ stacked vocal arrangements.

Before the show, the singer receives a chocolate cake decorated by drummer Gard Nilssen and dedicated to “the Herring Queen” (Sundfør’s tour nickname – her home town Haugesund is Norway’s largest herring exporter). But any further

Simon Fernandez (12)

SILDA DRONNINGA
GRATULERER MED DAGEN SUSANNE!!

Gateau defendant: (clockwise, from top left) Sundfør gets her birthday cake, Copenhagen; live keyboardist Øysten Moen; in Stockholm; drummer Gard Nilssen in Copenhagen; Susanne at the keys; guitarist/keyboardist Gunhild Kristoffersen; in Copenhagen; and (centre) the decorated cake box.

birthday celebrations will have to wait, because the tour bus must leave at 7.30am for the seven-hour drive to Swedish capital Stockholm.

Before showtime at that city's harbour-side Kägelbanan venue, Sundfør reflects on how her popularity outside Norway is on the increase, with recent dates in Berlin and London being upgraded due to demand.

"I love touring," she says, flashing a natural smile. "I see a lot of cities, play for new audiences every night. It's the only time I get to play. Professional musicians rarely play for fun any more!"

She lights up too when discussing a move to London and her plan "to study mixing, so I can better get my music to sound exactly the way I want," but suddenly shifts to her preoccupation with climate change.

"It's frustrating and sad that the people running our countries aren't doing more to prevent it," she laments. "Life is such a disappointment, you just have to make the best of it. It's something I want to express in my music, lyrically and musically. I hope to buy some old equipment and synths, to explore organic and beautiful sounds that I think are connected to nature."

This new methodology will mean a sonic shift away from last year's single Fade Away – part of a mid-set peak with humungous electro-throbber Accelerate – which bears a glorious Abba-like shine. A harpsichord introduces *Ten Love Songs*' 10-minute centrepiece Memorial, though Sundfør elects to replace its orchestral fantasia elements rather than try to replicate them, playing acoustic guitar for the only time in the set. Throughout she is rooted behind her keyboard with just an occasional outstretched arm to reinforce the moment, unlike the demented man-fan grooving wildly in front of the stage.

"There's one at every show," she sighs later, "with a little circle created around him."

The dancer may not appreciate the way Sundfør ends the main set with the mid-tempo swoon of 2012 single White Foxes, rather than the pumping, tumescent Insects, which began life as a feminist tract before encompassing a more generalised view of humankind. She's unapologetic though.

"I'd love to be Number 1 all over," she concludes. "But if that was my main goal, I'd be bored, stressed, I wouldn't be comfortable playing that game. I have to go my own way."

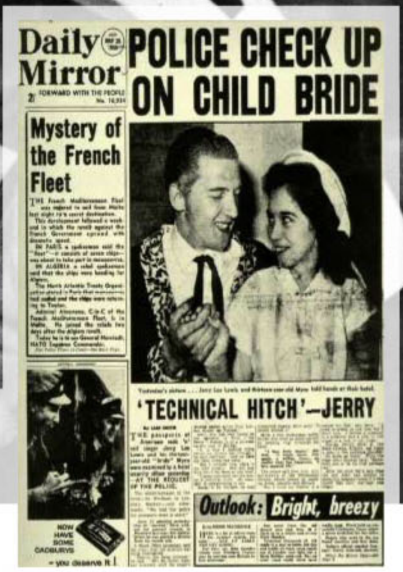
Martin Aston

COLLABORATIONGAMES

Susanne on movie themes, Röyksopp and going OTT.

Sundfør's electronic pursuits mirror her vocal contributions to work by Anthony 'M83' Gonzalez (the theme tune to Tom Cruise sci-fi vehicle Oblivion), Norwegian duo Röyksopp's (below) LP *The Inevitable End* and Sweden's Kleerup (his mini-album *As If We Never Won*), among others. "I love collaboration," she says. "I grew up doing music alone I was only in a band [Norway's Kraut-influenced Hypertext] for a year, but I had no time because of my own music. Music is about communication and if you make music with another person, it's very giving. I especially liked working with Anthony, I was such a huge fan of his. He co-produced Memorial with me. I like the LA music scene, for the music especially Jenny Lewis and Beck but also the attitude to new collaborations, meeting new people. It feels like people are open to exploring.

"I like big pop songs too," she adds. "The first time I heard [David Guetta's] Titanium, I thought, Is this really allowed? It's so over the top. But it's important to remove the idea of what is correct the real question is, Is it a good piece of work?"



Daily Mirror

POLICE CHECK UP ON CHILD BRIDE

Mystery of the French Fleet

'TECHNICAL HITCH'—JERRY

Outlook: Bright, breezy

TIMEMACHINE

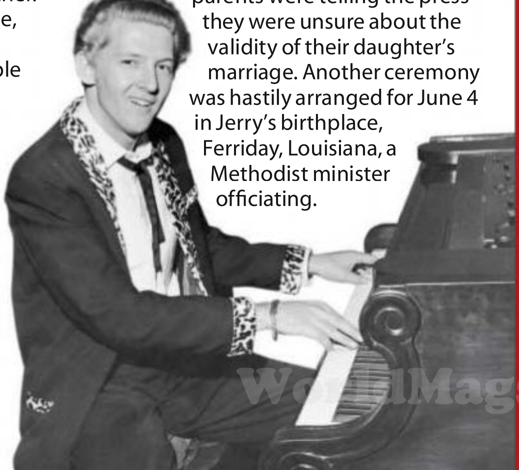
JUNE 1958 ...JERRY LEE LEWIS ROCKED BY SCANDAL

Shaken nerves, rattled brain: (clockwise from main) Jerry Lee Lewis on-stage; the Mirror reports; at the piano; in the film High School Confidential; with wife Myra.

JUNE 27 Jerry Lee had returned to Memphis following a May 1958 tour debacle in Britain. The revelation: he was married to 13-year-old Myra Gail Brown, his first cousin once removed. The scandal resulted in his departure from the UK after just three dates of a 71-show tour. "Baby Snatcher Quits" proclaimed one headline: the news that he'd been married twice before, once when he was 14 and later, bigamously, at 16, inflamed the British press further.

Heading back to Tennessee, where they understood such marriages, seemed the sensible thing to do. But things had changed. Sam Phillips at Sun Records was alarmed at how volatile the situation had become, fearing that Lewis – who'd notched such massive-selling records as Whole Lot Of Shakin' Going On, Great Balls Of Fire and Breathless during his first months with the label – may not survive the backlash. Though Jerry Lee's current single, High School Confidential, had been raised high in the charts because of his starring role in the film of that title, he'd not been able to cash in on its full impact and had ignored the film's New York premiere on the journey home.

Things were falling apart all around Lewis. His first wife, Dorothy, threatened he'd never see his son again. His new wife Myra's parents were telling the press they were unsure about the validity of their daughter's marriage. Another ceremony was hastily arranged for June 4 in Jerry's birthplace, Ferriday, Louisiana, a Methodist minister officiating.



"I CAN CRY AND WISH ALL I WANT TO BUT I CAN'T CONTROL THE PRESS."

Back in Memphis, Sam Phillips talked things over with Jerry Lee and it was decided that they would take out a full-page advertisement in Billboard on June 9, written in the form of an open letter.

"This whole thing started because I tried and did tell the truth," the somewhat uncharacteristic missive began, before reiterating the circumstances of his second divorce. He concluded by saying, "I hope that if I am washed up as an entertainer it won't be because of this bad publicity because I can cry and wish all I want to but I can't control the press or the sensationalism that these people will go to to get a scandal started to sell newspapers."

Not that Sam Phillips was passing up any opportunity to promote Sun Records. He promptly released The Return Of Jerry Lee, a novelty cash-in single, dreamt up by Jack Clement. It featured Memphis DJ George Klein posing a number of questions that were answered by segments culled from Jerry Lee's previous recordings.

"What did Queen Elizabeth say about you?" asked Klein at one point. Jerry's spliced-in answer? "Goodness gracious – Great Balls Of Fire!" "We think it's a cute record," said Phillips.

On June 11, Jerry Lee made his first attempt to get his career going again with the first of two shows scheduled for New York City's Cafe de Paris. Few customers turned out, and the Big Apple's press duly picked up where the British press had left off. After just one performance, Jerry Lee returned home. His final hit of '58 seemed to say it all. It was titled Fools Like Me.

Though Jerry Lee remained under contract to Sun, he ceased recording for a while, as the five-figure fees for concerts slipped to one hundred dollars-a-night appearances in minor clubs and beer joints. Dick Clark, in what he later agreed was "a cowardly act", dropped Jerry Lee from his show and many other DJs refused to play his records. Only Alan Freed continued to do so, until the payola scandal put paid to his own on-air activities.

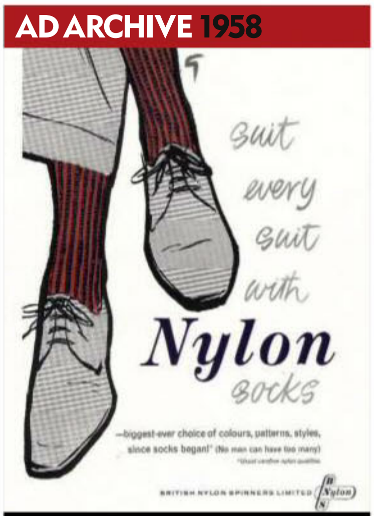
It wouldn't be until April 1961, and a US Top 30 single with a cover of Ray Charles's What'd I Say, that Lewis's career again began moving in an upward direction. In April 1962, he visited Britain once more for two dozen dates, playing venues including the Wigan Empress, the Grimsby Gaiety and the Mitcham Majestic, and astounded those fortunate enough to witness his return.

Incredibly, Jerry Lee played the shows just a week after the tragic death by drowning of his infant son, Steve Allen Lewis. In the 2014 book His Own Story, the raised-Christian singer mused to writer Rick Bragg, "Why did this happen to me? I don't understand. But I will understand someday."

Staying true to rock'n'roll when those around him had thrown in the towel – as he'd so blisteringly prove on 1964's album *Live At The Star-Club, Hamburg* – he'd survived. Just.

Fred Dellar

AD ARCHIVE 1958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Getty Images (5), Mirrorpix (2), Topfoto, Alamy, The Advertising Archives

ALSO THIS MONTH

JIMMIE JIMMIE

1 **Jimmie Rodgers**, (pictured) whose Secretly is in the US charts, appears on the Ed Sullivan Show. **John Wayne** is guest host.

ZAPPA'S JOY

3 **Frank Zappa** graduates from Antelope Valley High School in Lancaster, CA.

BOY CRAZY

15 The pilot for pop show Oh Boy! is screened by ABC-TV. Producer **Jack Good** had just been fired by the BBC – he allegedly wanted to turn the Six-Five Special show into a touring entity.

MU ORDER

15 It's announced in The Guardian that the Musicians' Union have placed a ban on its members working at the Scala in Wolverhampton due to manager Michael Wade's colour bar.

SKIFF ONLY

20 **Lonnie Donegan** signs with the Dot label in the US. His first release under the new deal will be Grand Coulee Dam.

BILLIE FURY

21 At New York's Loew's Sheridan Theatre **Billie Holiday** appears in a midnight concert, Jazz In Greenwich Village. **The Dave Brubeck Quartet** is also on the bill.

CASH 'N' CARRY

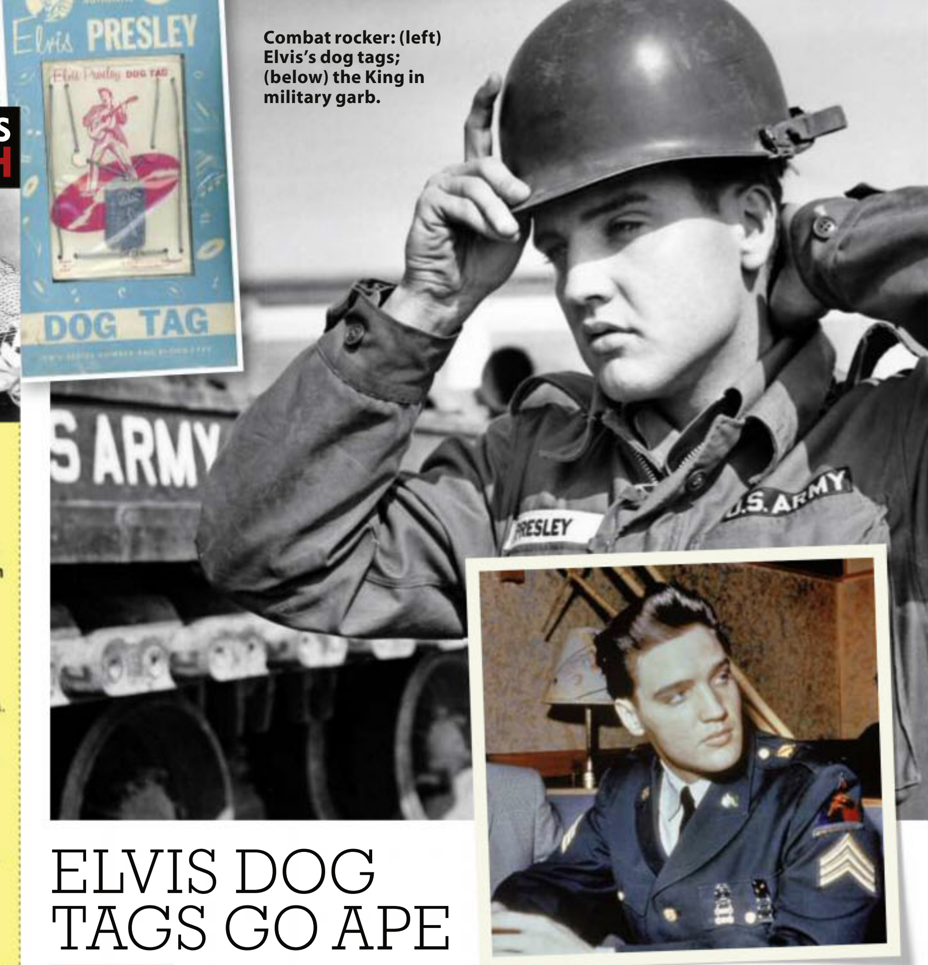
23 **Johnny Cash**'s Guess Things Happen That Way hits Number 1 on the US country music charts. It stays there eight weeks.

HI-FI FOR ALL

30 Billboard announces that "stereo is the thing this year" and reveals that nearly 200 stereo recordings are due out in the next few weeks.

NOVELTY ROCK

30 With novelty discs breaking big in the US, ABC-Paramount release Polka Dotted Poliwampus by **Clint Miller**, the National label wading in with The Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor



Combat rocker: (left) Elvis's dog tags; (below) the King in military garb.

ELVIS DOG TAGS GO APE

JUNE 16 Elvis Presley dog tags are to be marketed in time for the King Creole movie. At a dollar each, the tags feature Elvis's US Army serial number, a facsimile signature, his blood type (O) and an etched portrait. To date 1,500,000 tags have been produced, with 500,000 tags a week to follow. On June 23 in Boston, local DJ Arnie Ginsburg offers six sample tags to the first three boys to turn up at the studios with guitars and the first three girls who show up in swimsuits. On a cold, rainy night a crowd of 600 gathers; three police cars soon arrive to keep order.

Talking back: The Coasters.

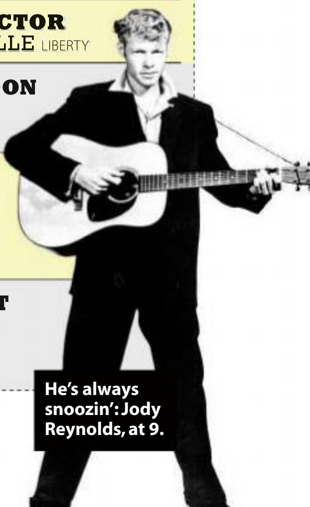
YAK IN THE USA

JUNE 21 The Coasters' Yakety Yak reaches Number 2 in the US singles chart but is pipped to the top spot by Elvis Presley's Hard Headed Woman. Nevertheless, it is destined to become the most successful R&B single of the year. Penned by Leiber & Stoller, the record – a list of humdrum domestic chores demanded by a stern-faced mother – prominently features the playing of saxophone great King Curtis. The tune inspires Boots Randolph's Yakety Sax in 1963, best known in Britain as Benny Hill's "chase theme", and will later be covered by Lee Perry and, in unfamiliarly moralistic mode, 2 Live Crew.

TOPTEN

US SINGLES JUNE 30

1 **THE PURPLE PEOPLE EATER** SHEB WOOLEY MGM
2 **ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DREAM** THE EVERLY BROTHERS CADENCE
3 **SECRETLY** JIMMIE RODGERS ROULETTE
4 **RETURN TO ME** DEAN MARTIN CAPITOL
5 **YAKETY YAK** THE COASTERS ATCO
6 **BIG MAN** THE FOUR PREPS CAPITOL
7 **WITCH DOCTOR** DAVID SEVILLE LIBERTY
8 **SUGAR MOON** PAT BOONE DOT
9 **ENDLESS SLEEP** JODY REYNOLDS DEMON
10 **TWILIGHT TIME** THE PLATTERS MERCURY



He's always snoozin': Jody Reynolds, at 9.

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GOLDSTANDARDS

SOUTHERN SOULS

Singers Ben E. King and Percy Sledge both left us in April. Geoff Brown pays tribute.

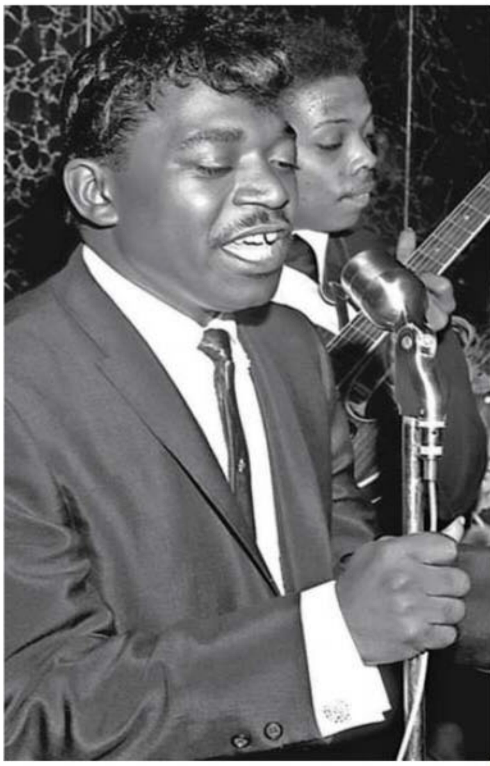
Some songs transcend genre, indeed transcend the very fact that they are songs, to become part of the culture's fabric. And that is certainly the case with the imperishable soul standards Stand By Me and When A Man Loves A Woman, songs whose lyrics have reached across generations to provide uplift, solace and inspiration. Poignantly, Ben E. King and Percy Sledge, the men who recorded the original and best versions of those songs, died within days of each other, Sledge on April 14, Benny on the 30th.

In a world inhabited by outsize characters with egos to match, both were simply nice men, gifted in differing ways but linked by singular vocal talents. Sledge was primarily a fine interpreter of Southern soul ballads, but Benjamin Earl Nelson, as King was born on September 28, 1938 in Henderson, North Carolina, was a more versatile talent, as comfortable on older standards and deeper gospel as he was on the compositions tailored to his rich, rangey baritone. He was as complete a soul singer as there was in the late '50s, '60s and '70s, a period in which King also co-wrote numerous songs of lasting quality, starting with There Goes My Baby, his first hit as lead singer with The Drifters in 1959. The joy of This Magic Moment, the pain of I Count The Tears, the 1960 Number 1 smash Save The Last Dance For Me – another indelible performance – set the stage for King's solo career. A year later, Leiber & Stoller's Spanish Harlem unveiled the more nuanced solo singer. "On Spanish Harlem I felt a bit weird working with them, 'cos they'd almost told me how to sing it," he told me in 1974. "'Don't 'soul' it, no riffs here… they would say, 'do it simple'."

The pinnacle of his solo work came later in '61 with Stand By Me, which he adapted from the gospel song Lord Stand By Me, which he "took and turned around", as he told me in '74. "Most of my songs are from other people's situations. My problems are few," he smiled. At that time, Benny was back on Atlantic and about to record his last big hit with Supernatural Thing, although in '77 A Star In The Ghetto, recorded with The Average White Band, was a smaller success. But Stand By Me abided, be it on a film soundtrack or a TV ad for jeans, the latter usage taking it to UK Number 1 in February 1987.

Although by no means a one-hit wonder, Percy Sledge was defined by his everlasting When A Man Loves A Woman, recorded in 1966. Despite numerous mangling cover versions, his original reading still strikes home, as plaintive, heartfelt, honest and uplifting as it sounded on February 17, the day he recorded it. And while he was a solid interpreter of uptempo songs such as Put A Little Lovin' On Me, ballads drew the best out of his soulful, unhurried voice. Look no farther than two other 1966 recordings – It Tears Me Up and Warm And Tender Love, both US Top 20 charters, the latter a UK Number 34 hit – or 1967's glorious Out Of Left Field and 1968's Take Time To Know Her, a US Number 11.

Born in November 1940 in Leighton, Alabama, Sledge married young, was a father at 19, and had three children by 1964 when he was asked to dep for local band The Esquires' singer. I last met him in 1994,



When the night has come: Ben E. King records a TV appearance, 1967; (right) Alabama song man Percy Sledge sings, Jimi Hendrix plays, New York, 1966.

"IT'S A GREAT FEELING TO HAVE A SONG PEOPLE LOVE SO MUCH."
Percy Sledge

BEN E. KING
DON'T PLAY THAT SONG!

THE LEGACY

Album: *Don't Play That Song!* (Atlantic, 1962)
The Sound: *Spanish Harlem* gave ex-Drifter King a distinctive debut, but this impeccable album defined his sheer variety, from the raw hurt of the title track to Here Comes The Night's exotic Stan Applebaum arrangement, Doc Pomus/Phil Spector's so very happy Latino-tinged First Taste Of Love and woebegone Young Boy Blues, and the hazy mystery of On The Horizon and Hermit Of The Misty Mountain. Oh, and Stand By Me's on it too. A Brill Building classic.

Photoshot, Alamy, Rex, Michael Randolph (popsiephotos.com)

and he was happy to reminisce about his signature song. "I said, Man, I ain't never sung with no horns or guitars or drums." But the fee was $50, he explained. "I wasn't bringing home but $110 a week and I had just been laid off. So I just made up this song on-stage, Why Did You Leave Me Baby" (*sings it to When A Man's melody*). Quin Ivy, top DJ in Sheffield at that time, happened to be at that party and whisked the singer into his studio, Sledge coming up with the final lyric to When A Man Loves A Woman. But the writing credit remained as The Esquires' Cameron Lewis and Andrew Wright. Sledge gave up his share, a not-so-small fortune.

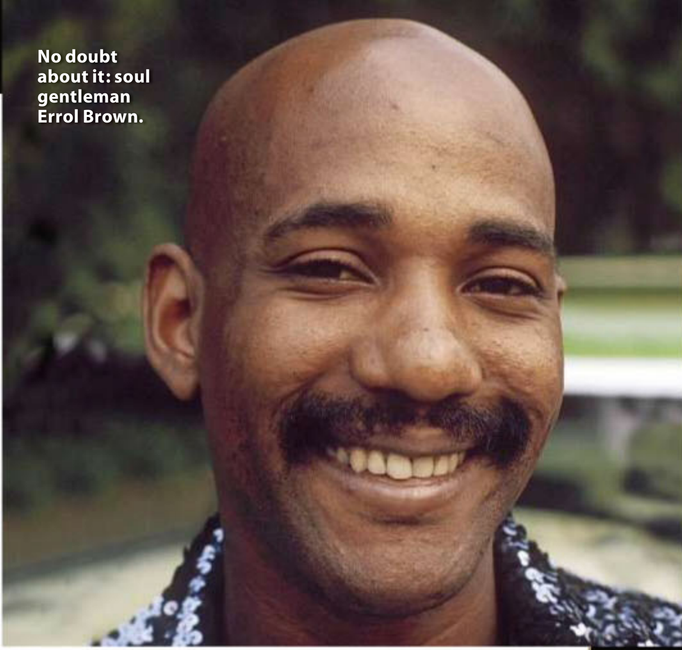
Signed to Atlantic, his star shone bright, if briefly. By 1974 he had signed to Phil Walden's Capricorn label to release *I'll Be Your Everything* and retained a solid global country-soul fan base. Occasional albums followed, from 1983's *Percy!* to *Shining Through The Rain* in 2004, interest consistently piqued by the use of When A Man Loves A Woman in films (Platoon, The Big Chill, Crying Game) or TV ads (Levi's). "It's a great feeling," he told me, "to have a song like [When A Man Loves A Woman] when people love it so much."

Percy Sledge
When A Man Loves A Woman

THE LEGACY

Album: *When A Man Loves A Woman* (Atlantic, 1966)

The Sound: Almost everything you were ever going to get from Percy Sledge you heard on his debut album, or indeed, in that imperishable title track. His relaxed delivery, given bite as he stretches for a note, is lifted by the Muscle Shoals rhythm team. An early affinity with Dan Penn songs (You Fooled Me, Success), the punchy closer Love Me Like You Mean It – there's such innate optimism in his voice that even his sad songs couldn't help but make you happy.



No doubt about it: soul gentleman Errol Brown.

ERROL BROWN

HOT CHOCOLATE SINGER

BORN 1944

Debonair, soulful and bald, Errol Brown fronted London pop-rock-R&B hybridisers Hot Chocolate from 1970 to 1984, singing smash 45s including You Sexy Thing, Every 1's A Winner and Emma, among others. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, he was living in England when he began writing songs after the death of his mother in 1963. In 1969, he and collaborator Tony Wilson sent their reggae version of Give Peace A Chance to Apple records, who released it after John Lennon approved their wildly amended lyrics. Initially christened the Hot Chocolate Band, their career blossomed with the assistance of RAK boss Mickie Most, and they reached Number 1 with So You Win Again in June 1977. They were a more complex group than they are often given credit for, with You Sexy Thing (covered live by Bruce Springsteen) enduring as a family party favourite contrasting with Emma, a tale of unfulfilled dreams and suicide later interpreted by The Sisters Of Mercy. After he left Hot Chocolate – they continued with an Errol Brown impersonator – his solo career proved a quieter affair. One of music's few self-declared Conservative voters, Brown was made an MBE in 2003 and received an Ivor Novello in 2004. He played a farewell UK tour in 2009, and succumbed to liver cancer at his home in the Bahamas on May 6.

Ian Harrison

JACK ELY

KINGSMEN VOCALIST

BORN1943

Jack Ely's brush with fame was over almost before it had begun. But when he sang The Kingsmen's 1963 hit cover of Louie Louie, the song composed by LA doo wopper Richard Berry in 1956, he contributed to one of rock's finest moral panics. The Portland-born Ely's indistinct vocal gave rise to the belief that the crude 45 was a litany of sexual deviancy (excited transcriptions of its supposedly filthy lyrics can be read online in the FBI's ultimately shrugging investigation). But he was soon supplanted by drummer Lynn Easton, and had to watch as his former bandmate lip-synced his performance on TV. Ely would tour with his own line-up of The Kingsmen, later winning royalties and the right to be credited as vocalist; he would go on to serve in Vietnam and worked as a horse trainer. In August 1983 at KFJC radio's Maximum Louie Louie Marathon in California, he met Richard Berry for the first time, and in 2012 he released his Christian LP *Love Is All Around You Now*. As for Louie Louie, it would be covered by the likes of Motörhead, The Stooges, The Fall and beyond.

Clive Prior

THEY ALSO SERVED

MANLY BUT smooth singer **RONNIE CARROLL** (b.1934) was born **Ronald Cleghorn** in Belfast. From 1957 to 1963 he enjoyed hits including Roses Are Red and Say Wonderful Things, and represented Britain in the Eurovision Song Contest in 1962 and 1963. A born gambler, he later sang on cruise ships, ran nightclubs, sold fast food, and stood for election on the Rainbow Alliance/Make Politicians History ticket (his ambition was to poll zero votes). Though he died on April 13, he remained on the list of general election candidates – as 'The Eurovisionary Carroll' – polling 113 votes in the Hampstead and Kilburn constituency.

GUITARIST **PETER PHILLIPS** (b.1964) was a founder member of Rhode Island's **Six Finger Satellite**, playing on the discordant outfit's first two EPs and debut LP. He left in 1994, later recording with **Velvet Crush** and **Matthew Sweet**.

BIRMINGHAM-BORN **DAVE BALL** (b.1950) played guitar with **Ace Kefford Stand** and **Big Bertha** before replacing **Robin Trower** in Procol Harum in 1971. In 1972 he formed the short-lived **Bedlam** with **Cozy Powell**, and in 1973 played on **Long John Baldry**'s *Good To Be Alive*. Later he appeared live with ex-Procol Harum alumni and his own **Ballbreakers**.

FRONTMAN **ALAN WASS** (b.c.1982) led London-based bands **Lefthand** and **The Lipstick Melodies**, but is best known for his time in the unhappy orbit of **Peter Doherty**, with whom he co-wrote **Babyshambles**' What Katy Did Next. In February he technically died after an accident with a glass window: he suffered a final heart attack on April 26.

VENTRILOQUIST **KEITH HARRIS** (b.1947) reached Number 4 in the UK charts in January 1983 with Orville's Song, a duet with his dummy (an oversized green duckling) written by **Bobby Crush**. He hosted his own BBC1 TV series from 1982 to 1990, appeared at several Royal Variety Shows, and beat Public Enemy's **Flavor Flav** on Channel 5's game show The Farm in 2005.

COMPOSER **SID TEPPER** (b.1918), with **Roy C. Bennett**, published more than 300 songs from 1946 to 1970. These included Red Roses For A Blue Lady, The Young Ones and The Naughty Lady Of Shady Lane, sung by **Sinatra, Cliff Richard**, **Ray Charles** and others. He also co-wrote more than 40 songs for **Elvis**, Blue Hawaii among them.

LONDON-BORN pianist **RALPH SHARON** (b.1923) worked with **Ted Heath** before moving to the US in 1954. In 1958 he began his long association with **Tony Bennett**, encouraging the vocalist to sing jazz. In 1962 he brought Bennett his signature I Left My Heart In San Francisco. Sharon also recorded solo and played with **Duke Ellington**, **Charles Mingus** and **Chris Connor**. In 2002 he retired from touring with Bennett, who always saluted Sharon from the stage.

ACTRESS **SUZANNE CROUGH** (b.1963) played Tracy Partridge, the youngest member of ABC TV's music sitcom series **The Partridge Family**, from 1970 to 1974. She later ran a bookshop, worked in office supplies and raised two daughters.

Clive Prior

Ronnie Carroll: Euro crooner and would-be politician.

Hobbled by **polio**, sued by **Pye**, mocked by **Dylan**, "sponged" by **The Beatles**, popfolkpsych's **Sunshine Superman** has always come up **smiling**, **innovating**, and on a **mission** to **enlighten**. "It's more than a career," insists Donovan.

Interview by **DAVE DiMARTINO** • Portrait by **PIPER FERGUSON**

FASHION DESIGNER SUE WONG'S HISTORIC Los Feliz residence, The Cedars, veers on just the right side of excessive. There's polished wood everywhere, a grand solarium housing plush green Art Deco chairs, fireplaces galore, chandeliers, lion imagery at every turn, and walls tinted (appropriately, today) a fetching shade of saffron. Constructed in 1921 for film director Maurice Tourneur, it has housed Jimi Hendrix, The Velvet Underground, Bob Dylan. And, for a while, Howard Hughes.

Donovan Leitch, who turns 69 this month, seems comfortable here. He's in town to appear at a benefit concert celebrating the 10th anniversary of the David Lynch Foundation, proceeds aimed at bringing Transcendental Meditation to at-risk groups suffering with PTSD. A worthy cause, and there will be a fascinating array of guests – Angelo Badalamenti, Duran Duran, Wayne Coyne, Karen O, and Donovan himself, who has his own anniversary to celebrate.

For it was a half-century ago this year that Donovan emerged on Ready Steady Go! with the look, tone and folk-infused style of a young Woody Guthrie. Also in a rollercoaster 1965, he released the 45s Catch The Wind and Colours, and began recording what most call the first psychedelic LP: *Sunshine Superman*. A stream of marvellous albums – melding folk, jazz, pop, intricate textures, delicate melodies and a cast including oysters, crabs, fair maidens, and Mama Cass – and an inspired string of pop hits followed, the latter gathered and out next month on *Donovan Retrospective*, a 50th anniversary compilation.

WE'RE NOT WORTHY

David Lynch salutes a fellow cosmic flyer.

"There's more to his music than meets the eye. He's a poet, a spiritual seeker. It manifests itself in his music, lyrics and instrumentation, and in his lifestyle, in everything he does. He's the musical wing of the Transcendental Meditation programme, we've toured and it's always great travelling with him."

Alamy

He is a pioneer, not always receiving the credit he's due (he has a view on that), a prime mover in the revolution that the popular music of the '60s wrought, dragging The Beatles to Rishikesh and featuring, for good and ill, in D.A. Pennebaker's Bob Dylan documentary Don't Look Back. Although acquainted with the madness of the era (he was the first major British pop star nabbed for possession of cannabis), he somehow remained married to the love of his life, Linda Lawrence, who inhabits many of his early songs and shares his current home in Ireland.

In person, he's warm and friendly, very much the storyteller you'd expect of the man who penned that spoken intro to Atlantis. A story starts, a story finishes, and there is a rhythm you're disinclined to interrupt. He looks you in the eye, uses your first name, and exudes genuine positivity. We sit next to each other on a couch, and when we discuss songwriting, he draws a parallel to shoemaking, tapping my boot to emphasise his point. "It's not that you sit down to make a pair of boots and say, 'OK, today you've got to make another song'," he says, smiling. "First of all, you need the heel."

I should tell you I was in the audience at the Miami Beach Convention Center in 1969.

My goodness, was that when they gave me

➢

the keys to the city? The mayor gave me a police escort. That was almost the highest heights of the '60s touring. In Miami we stayed at the Fontainebleau: Gypsy Dave, myself and my father – he worked with me for a couple of years; we were very close. When we checked out after three or four nights, the manager came especially to say goodbye to my father. Afterwards, I asked, "What did he say?" My father said, "Very pleased that your son stayed with us, Mr Leitch. He spent more money than Frank Sinatra." I said, "What do you mean?" "Well, we did have a few parties, Donovan."

Do you remember what it was that first attracted you to music?

Well, I didn't know it, but from the age of four and five, my father was reading me poetry and I was listening to folk music from my mother and her six sisters and my father and his brother and all the relatives. I didn't know it was folk music.

I come from an Irish-Scots family, but in Scotland, just like in Ireland and Wales, there's a lot of singing. In the front room, they'd clear all the furniture and they'd put chairs along one wall for the women, and chairs along one wall for the men. And the women were forever coming in with the whisky and the sandwiches and the beer, and then one chair was pushed in the middle of the room, and a slightly tipsy relative was pushed onto the chair, and that relative would have at least one song that they always sang.

And so I did know that this was a tradition that went back hundreds, maybe thousands of years – they call it the Celtic tradition, but really it's older than the Celts. There was something happening here that I felt I could do. So I learned all the ballads very early. But I didn't know it would become my career – or my mission. It's more than a career.

To what extent did your contracting polio affect your life? Did it make you more introspective, more sensitive to art?

I was born in 1946. About a month after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were annihilated, I was conceived. The war was over but the streets were torn up by the bombing, and there was diphtheria, scarlet fever and polio, and all the sewers were running into the streets, and the kids were playing in the streets, and so I got this. I didn't know that I was different. But I do remember a device that was put on the leg. They cut the Achilles tendon so the foot didn't become a clubfoot. My father kept me with the swimming, and the swimming is what helped. I don't remember *having* polio as a kid, but maybe it withdrew me from the usual upbringing of kids in Glasgow. I was left on my own a lot.

Was there a defining moment in your relationship with music?

I loved the jazz and I got a drum kit. But I was 14, listening to The Everly Brothers and Buddy Holly, and falling in love with these girls at school. So I'm confused. But then Mick Sharman is playing Hank Williams, and I said, "Give me that guitar, let me see it," and I play it. Well, I don't have a band. I can't be a drummer without a band, but I *can* be a guitar player. And I started learning how to play guitar. And Mick said, "I have a girlfriend who has a guitar. I'll borrow it." So he borrowed the guitar from the girlfriend, and the girlfriend never got it back. It was an archtop with an f-hole, like the old blues pickers. Same as Paul McCartney had when he was 14.

When did it start getting serious?

When I was 15 or 16, in St Albans, in the south of England where the family had moved, we went to parties for three days. My father had to come and find me sometimes. In those days it was against the law to actually leave home until you were 18, and the police would come and get you and bring you home.

But at this party, this older bohemian saw I was playing guitar and trying to learn things, and he said, "I think you're serious. Come with me," and he took me into another room in this party house full of bohemians, and there was a record collection of vinyl, from one end of the room to the other, all along the floor, and a record player. He said, "If you're serious, sit down and listen to this. All of it."

And I took a whole weekend and listened to it. It was early folk, early blues, jazz, there was classical, there was spoken word, W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, it was Allen Ginsberg, Alan Watts – *everything* was there. And I went through it all. There was Eskimo music, baroque, there was poetry and jazz from the west coast of America.

Years later I poked my head into Dylan's Chronicles, and I'm sure I read this: He came down from Duluth, and on the way through Minnesota there was a guy who said, "I think you're serious. You should come into this room and you should listen to all this vinyl."

I'm going to give you some names. Tell me about these people. First: Ashley Kozak.

Ashley Kozak. It's interesting, because he was managing Shawn Phillips, the 12-string guitar player and singer/songwriter. I'd met him in folk clubs and we got on really well. Now, I already had the manager Geoff Stephens, but that was for a period of recording and a couple of gigs.

Ashley was more fascinating, because he played bass, and he came from the world of jazz, and he worked for [Brian Epstein's] NEMS Enterprises, so here was the new, serious live concert agency world. We're on the cusp of big change in '65 and '66 in the whole professional music world. Before, we were only singing one or two songs live, and with other artists – it was like a cabaret. Nobody played a full concert, really, and then when a band *did* play a full concert, they had to stop it because of riots and screaming girls.

And that's when I said to Ashley, "Get me a real concert – so I can actually sing for at least 40 minutes. Maybe in the Albert Hall…"

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Donovan: Seasons of the Leitch.

1 The singer, aged around seven: "There was diphtheria and polio, sewers running in the streets."

2 In folk regalia, 1965: "[There was] the overlay of, always, He's another *Dylan*."

3 With fellow TM enthusiast David Lynch, April 2015: "In an altered state you can watch things moving slowly."

4 My thumbs have gone weird!: Flanked by Dylan and Mary Travers, Newport Folk Festival, July 1965.

5 In Rishikesh, 1968, with George Harrison and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: "The Beatles were spongeing beautifully."

6 Ready to meditate, 1973: "I wrote at least 20 songs on ecology."

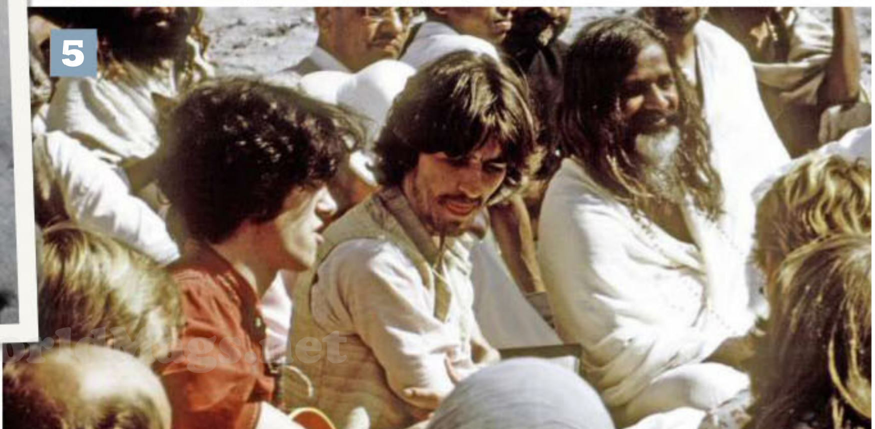
7 Gyp digs the slowness: Outside court for his marijuana bust on June 10, 1966, with sculptor-factotum Gypsy Dave Mills.

8 With life partner Linda Lawrence, Japan, 1973: "She said, 'You have to be inspired. You're a poet.'"

9 Enjoying Mellow Yellow's fruits with pop production prodigy Mickie Most: "He said, 'I'll look after the singles.'"

10 St Albans Scot Seeks Beatnik Scene, 1965: ["I listened to] W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, Allen Ginsberg, Eskimo music, baroque – *everything*."

Alamy (3), Globe, Photoshot (2), Rex, PA, Getty Images, photograph by Stewart Lawrence: Donovan Discs 2015



And Allen Klein?

Allen Klein. The story goes, Linda [Lawrence, later Donovan's wife] meets Brian Jones when she's 16. Brian has just invented a band called The Rolling Stones. It's the greatest thing that's ever happened to British music. Linda and Brian have a child. But fame and difficulties for Brian split them apart.

But Linda, very early, is sitting in a room with Phil Spector, and here's Allen Klein and Phil talking. Allen makes a wish list. The Rolling Stones, he's already got, The Beatles too, and he says (*adopts rough New Jersey accent*), "I was watching that kid Donovan on The Ed Sullivan Show…" 1965 that was. And this is 1966. "And after everybody performs, you're supposed to get on the thing and cheesecake, bow and say thank you. Donovan the kid couldn't be found. He was gone. I want to *watch* that kid, that kid's important."

So Linda's watching this, and Phil is watching this. So Klein is actually *not* sympathy for the devil, *not* the nemesis, he's a guy who's like a promoter, and he knows how to promote people. I agree with Keith Richards, who said, "Allen took us from one level and put us on another level, where we belonged." And who knows how long that would've taken? And Allen took me to that place, too.

Mickie Most?

I was introduced to Mickie by Allen. Because what Allen did was, he phoned up Ashley Kozak and said, "I want Donovan. You can still manage him in Europe, I'll manage him in America – but we've got to get him out of that record deal with Pye Records." And he did. Klein tore the contract up. And he put me with Clive Davis, and he introduced me to Mickie Most. And I was waiting for that. Because I realised that little three-minute single could be a powerful, extraordinary thing. The single is a mini-movie – in three minutes, the whole thing happens.

Tell me a bit more about actually working with Mickie.

I've got a lovely picture of Mickie and I – we're looking nice and smart, and he's holding a Mellow Yellow gold disc, and he's not smiling, but we're young and happening.

So Allen introduced me to Mickie, and Mickie says, "OK, what have you got?" And I play him a few songs. By now, in late 1965, I'm wanting jazz, blues, folk, classical, poetic fusions in an unheard of combination. Nobody's done it before.

> "There's a **strange story** isn't there? That **Dylan didn't like me**? Or he was maybe **threatened**?"

OK, Miles Davis is doing *Sketches Of Spain*, I'm not saying I'm the first. But what I'm realising is: I've got something that is *all* the way. So I play Mickie Sunshine Superman, and he says, "That's the single." And when I say it's got double bass, electric bass, electric guitar and harpsichord, he says, "Whoa… you need an arranger. I'll look after the singles; you work with this guy John Cameron."

So we made five tracks. And Mickie says, because he knows I'm hanging out with The Beatles, "*Don't* play this to McCartney." Because there's a sponge going on. The Beatles were spongeing beautifully all forms of popular song. But I'm doing my thing, and Mickie says, "Don't play it to Paul" – and of course I did, because I wanted to.

But just at that point, Klein has taken me out of Pye – and I'm sued. But Mickie and I don't care. We go to California and make five more tracks in the CBS studios, and the *Sunshine Superman* album is complete. And Mickie Most says again, "Don't play it to anybody, because you've just been *sued*," and it goes on the shelf.

And that's the album with Season Of The Witch…

There's a lovely story about Season Of The Witch. We're at CBS studios in Hollywood, and the engineers have got white coats, and Mickie says, "Turn the bass up" to the engineers. And they say, "We have to have a conference." And off they go and have the conference. And they come back and say, "I'm sorry Mr Most, but the needle's going into the red." "Yeah?" says Mickie, "so just turn it up." They say: "Afraid we can't do that." Mickie says, "OK boys, sit down." So the two white coats sit down. And Mickie says to the two white coats, "Look, boys – your boss Clive Davis just gave me a million dollars to do three British bands. Do you think if I phoned him and asked for a bit more bass he would give it to me?" And the two guys go: "You've got the bass." This was Spinal Tap, 10 years before.

How do you feel in retrospect about your appearance in the Dylan movie Don't Look Back? I've always thought you got the short end of the stick there.

Yeah, there's a strange story that comes off it, isn't there? That Dylan didn't like me or something? Or he was maybe threatened by another songwriter coming along? You

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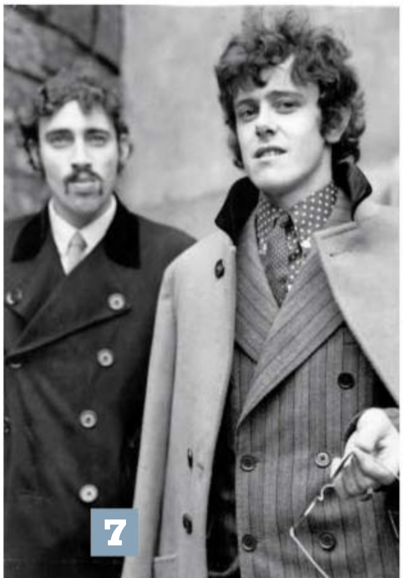
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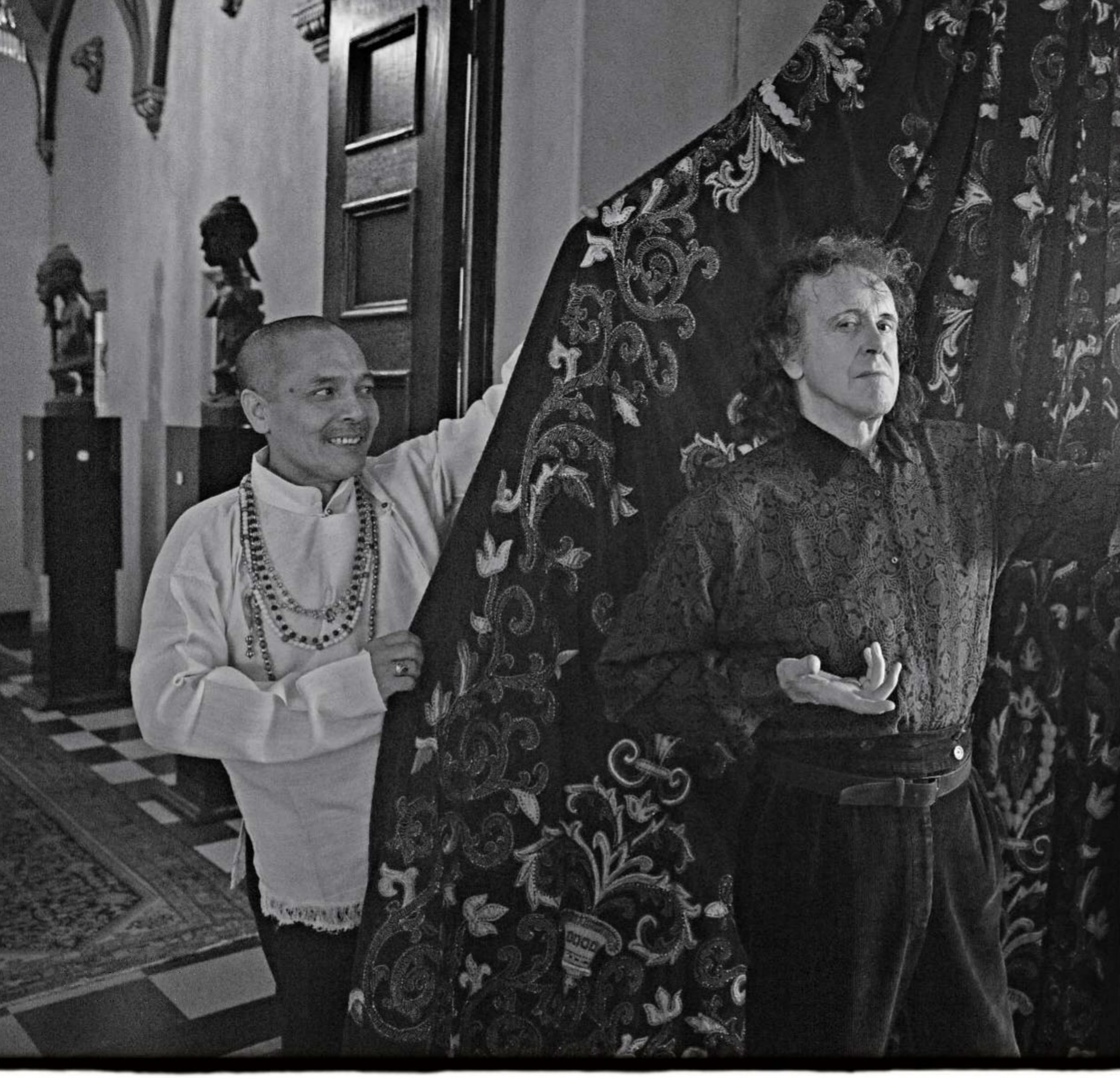


“There’d be **periods** when I **wouldn’t write songs** and **I’d wonder**, Is it just because **I’m lazy**? Then a **friend** of mine said, No, **you got bored**.”

< know, at the time, it looked like that, that there was some rift between us. But there wasn’t really a rift. I mean, they were from New York. And they were doing a lot of amphetamine. And we smoked a lot of hash. That was how it was – two things are clashing. And Dylan is a hipster from New York – and there was a lot of chat and a lot of rap – and maybe he chatted a bit too much. He said (*imitates Dylan’s drawl*), “I didn’t mean to put the guy down. I was just havin’ some fun. Havin’ some funnnn. I *like* the guy!” So when the press got hold of this, the two Ds, they made a battle.

But I love that bit in the movie, where Alan Price of The Animals is at the party, sitting there with Dylan, and Dylan’s looking at the newspaper, or talking about Donovan. Seemed like he’s always talking about Donovan: “Who’s this *Donovan*?” And Alan’s got, I think he’s got a bottle of tequila in one hand and a bottle of whisky in the other, and Alan says, “He’s not a fake, and he plays better guitar than you.” Dylan says, “I really hate him.” At parties you say these things. But we had private times you don’t see. You know that Subterranean Homesick Blues thing?

The video, with the cards?

I wrote a lot of those cards. I did it with Ginsberg on the Persian carpet in the Savoy Hotel suite.

Really?

Yeah. I mean, we’re from the same root. On his early trip to Britain, he went straight to Martin Carthy, who is our… let’s just say he is our root to the traditional music of the British Isles – you go to Martin to get that, and that’s where he got, I guess, Girl From The North Country. So it’s a root. And so the Dylan thing – it’s very interesting, but not as interesting as what Gypsy Dave and I were headed for after 1965: how do you actually grab this horse called pop music by the reins, and give it a shake and ride it, ride it and ride it? And we did.

When I hear artists like Belle & Sebastian and many others, I am reminded of your

Piper Ferguson

influence and reach. Do you think that, despite having sold a lot of records, you may remain underrated?

Oh, you mean, my influence? No, I think it's understood. About two years ago, I think, the third generation of journalists – maybe the fourth generation – they did their homework so much that after the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2012, I guess the statement was "Donovan single-handedly initiated the psychedelic revolution with his *Sunshine Superman*." And so a phrase like that pretty much sums up the historical spot that *Sunshine Superman* had. But you understand, when we were sued, it had to be pushed back eight months, and not be released until late in '66. So all of it's late '65-early '66. But still, late '66 was still before *Pepper*. So, underrated? Yes, probably with the overlay of, always, 'He's another *Dylan*.' Maybe that sort of slowed things down, the recognition of my place in history.

But I also feel that not enough recognition protected me, and too much recognition… is dangerous. Very dangerous. I couldn't be considered a great threat – maybe the prettiness, the softness that made the press think *ineffectual*, not really as important as the other artists, can't be believed, he'll never last – all those things that went on, in a way it was protective.

One of your *Donovan Retrospective* selections is one of those tracks whose reputation has grown with the years: Hey Gyp (Dig The Slowness). What on earth does that mean?

Gyp, of course, is Gypsy Dave. (*He pauses, seeming to remember a particular scene*) All right, we're sitting back, listening to music. A little bit high, high on maybe the ganja, and there's an incense stick. It's very quiet, the music is really low, jazz maybe, we're watching the curving smoke of the incense stick, and I turn to Gyp, and say, "Hey Gyp, dig the slowness." Because, when you're actually in an altered state, you can watch things that are moving really slow, and you can really *watch* them. Watching is important. If the *world* could look to *see* how it's really acting, poisoning the future for the children, poisoning the planet as we speak… That must be the reason why we do it – why *they* do it: they can't see it happening. And that's where meditation comes in.

There was something of a lull for you, wasn't there, from the later '70s? What was going on there?

There'd be periods when I wouldn't write songs, and I'd wonder, "Is it just because I'm lazy?" Then a friend of mine said, "No, you got bored." And I said, "Yeah, it could have been boredom." Linda, my wife, said, "You have to be inspired. You're a poet. What you write as a poet is at least 10 to 15 years before anyone is going to understand it. Because you didn't stop in the '60s and only write about '60s subjects. You started writing about '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000 subjects."

You moved on…

And when I do sing some of the newer songs to people, they don't quite understand what they're about. And she said, "You've got to learn, Don – it's not that you're not successful now because you haven't got the great songs you had in the '60s. It's that people are just catching up to what you were writing about in the '70s." For instance, ecology. I wrote at least 20 songs on ecology in the '70s and produced nine to 13 albums in the '70s, and most of the subject matter is just coming through now.

So it's dangerous to think an artist is, because he's not active, that he's lost it, or he feels sad, or he doesn't feel he can do it any more. Sometimes people have to catch up with what you've already done.

I saw on your website that you've got an archive series up and running.

Yeah, in 1970-1974 I was never out of the studio. It was extraordinary, mostly at Morgan studios [Willesden, north London], and there just are hundreds of songs in there, and it just keeps going. The engineers there were super guys, Mike Bobak and Robin Black.

How can we hear this material?

It's now just been transferred, and I guess there must be… right now there are 250 things. But I have to go through them to type the lyrics, for a start. Dylan, I think, is the other way – he's forever typing, and I think he's got all the lyrics he's ever recorded. But often I only have it scribbled on a piece of paper, and then I put the song down. So when that's coming? After the summer. It's called the *Buried Treasures Series*, because, you know – I'm really a gypsy pirate, so I thought *Buried Treasures*. Dylan's got his *Bootleg Series*, I've got my *Buried Treasures*.

When it's all said and done, how would you like to be remembered?

I didn't invent all this stuff, but I presented it in a combination, in such a way that it would open doors, so that Belle & Sebastian and many artists and writers around the world have found inspiration. It's quite natural. Because if you look at us, our generation, we found inspiration.

But you can separate in the '60s those singer-songwriters that read books in great numbers from those who were influenced by other pop songs. Of course I'm on the side of the ones who read a great amount of poetry and absorbed a great amount of books – and so, in a way, we're able to write about something other than just falling in love, or having a great dance on a Saturday night, or falling out of love, as pop music.

And I love pop music, and I *write* songs like that. But to actually introduce songwriters to deeper feelings, social issues and other emotional fields – of being human – it's a great thing that I feel I introduced. Ⓜ

Donovan Retrospective is released June 8 on Union Square Music. For tour news visit www.donovan.ie.

MELLOWFELLOW

Three stages of **Donovan**, by **Andrew Male**.

THE FOLK ONE!

Donovan
Fairytale
PYE, 1965
★★★★

For his second studio album, Donovan ditched the Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie influences, drawing deep from his own Scottish roots, the jazzy mid-'60s London folk scene and the burgeoning psychedelic movement, centred around bohemian Fitzrovia and the beatnik hash dealers in the One Tun pub on "Sunny" Goodge Street.

THE PSYCH ONE!

Donovan
Sunshine Superman
PYE, 1967
★★★★★

Label disputes meant Donovan's innovatory *Sunshine Superman* and *Mellow Yellow* albums were held back in the UK. But the singer's cultural loss was the UK record-buyer's gain as the UK *Sunshine Superman* is a cracking cross-section of dappled psychedelic highlights from those two releases, a de facto best-of from the singer's most groundbreaking period.

THE WEIRD ONE!

Donovan
HMS Donovan
DAWN, 1971
★★★★

Like 1967's *For Little Ones* portion of double album *A Gift From A Flower To A Garden*, *HMS Donovan* is ostensibly an LP for children, but the singer's Janschian acoustic arrangements of spookier selections from Herbert Strang's One Hundred Poems For Children are deeply mystical and weird, tapping into the same eerie pastoral otherworld as Vashti Bunyan's *Just Another Diamond Day*.

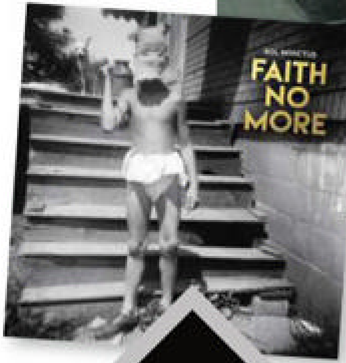
WELCOME TO THE FREAK SHOW

EMERGING FROM THE US PUNK UNDERGROUND, THEY UNWITTINGLY BECAME MTV'S ALTERNATIVE ROCK POSTER BOYS BEFORE ALIENATING THEIR ENTIRE AUDIENCE AND COLLAPSING IN A POOL OF THEIR OWN VITRIOL. EIGHTEEN YEARS ON FROM THEIR LAST ALBUM, **FAITH NO MORE**'S UNLIKELY RETURN REMAINS ANCHORED IN ANGER AND, DARE WE SAY, LOVE…

WORDS: **STEVIE CHICK**
PORTRAIT: **PIPER FERGUSON**

Mike Patton and Faith No More's resident gimp: "Most people run on a treadmill. I scream," says the singer of his vocal excercises.

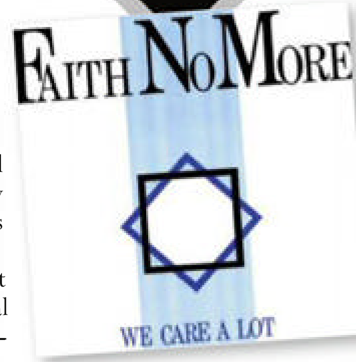
A ONE-TIME VAUDEVILLE HOUSE that was formerly a regular haunt of the Grateful Dead, tonight the stage at San Francisco's Warfield theatre is decked in white and decorated with several florists' worth of blooms, resembling a funeral in negative. The vibe is hardly sombre, however, the capacity crowd of 2,300 expressing an electric, impatient anticipation, hollering and stomping their feet. House lights dim and screams erupt as a spotlight tracks a figure walking on-stage – not a member of the group, but a man dressed head-to-toe in black leather, sporting a gimp mask, who stands mute and static. He will stay there during several songs in a gesture that, in its perverse absurdity, seems both *very* San Francisco, and *very* Faith No More.



Their previous show in their hometown, in 2010, was Faith No More's first on North American soil in over a decade, part of the Second Coming reunion tour that criss-crossed the globe over 87 shows between 2009 and 2012. That this epic (and lucrative) sortie only took in nine shows in the US perhaps reflects how these prophets of rage were ignored at home after 1992's *Angel Dust* wrong-footed their fanbase. By the time Faith No More announced their dissolution in 1998 – bidding sayonara with a maudlin cover of the Bee Gees' I Started A Joke, the acerbic five-piece realising the joke was finally on them – America hardly seemed to care.

"TOURING SCARRED US ALL, TURNED US INTO COCKROACHES RATHER THAN HUMAN BEINGS."
MIKE BORDIN

Now, everything is different. "We're much more popular now than when we split up," beamed bassist Bill Gould, earlier that day. Maturity and a fondness for each other bred by absence has also softened a previously brutal internal dynamic. "We were young, and we just weren't very good with each other," he acknowledges. "We knew each other's soft spots, and would lay into them." Tonight, however, a pre-show huddle in the dressing room is scored not by savage zings but good-humoured guffaws, leading drummer Mike 'Puffy' Bordin to tell MOJO, as they troop to the stage, "You want to know what life in Faith No More is like now? Uproarious fuckin' laughter!"



The show itself is scintillating, touring the vast sprawl of Faith No More's sound – from the feral wall-of-noise assaults of Caffeine, to pop-savvy rap-metal anthem Epic, to a straight-faced cover of The Commodores' MOR classic Easy (a UK Number 3 in 1993) – with a venom too vivid for mere nostalgia. Songs are plucked from *Sol Invictus*, their unexpected, widely acclaimed new album. For Faith No More, the reunion phase is over; it's time for the rebirth.

This turn of events clearly sits well with frontman Mike Patton, whose fearsome post-FNM workload suggested a man trying to put his past as far behind him as humanly possible. Tonight, as the lunatic fairground-ride of Land Of Sunshine draws to a close, he stands at the lip of the stage, pulls down the blood-red bandana across his face and unveils what can only be described as the shit-eating grin of vindication.

"WE DIDN'T FIT IN WITH ANYBODY," RECALLS Bill Gould, of Faith No More's earliest days. The group began in the early '80s, after Gould, drummer Bordin and keyboardist Roddy Bottum initiated a bloodless coup within Faith. No Man, the group 18-year-old LA native Gould joined a week after moving to San Francisco, ejecting mid-twenties goth-loving singer Mike Morris. "I grew up on The Germs and Black Flag. I wasn't into posing around in a dark coat," smiles Gould, in one of the many dressing rooms beneath the Warfield.

With Bordin under the spell of African percussion teacher CK Ladzekpo, the trio swapped trad rock rhythms for epic, circular jams, playing with a slew of singers and guitarists at the few clubs in San Francisco that would book them. "We were about pushing buttons, instigating provocation," says Bottum. One early vocalist, Courtney Love, excelled at the latter. "She was very extroverted," grins Gould. "She would get up in the audience's faces. She was not passive at all – people hated her! And we loved it."

They picked up a guitarist, Jim Martin, who'd formerly played with Puffy, and best friend, Metallica bassist Cliff Burton, in barband EZ Street. "We wanted a sound like the first Killing Joke record," says Bottum, "really tough, metal, aggro guitar, without solos and without the dumb attitude. And with Jim, we got a little of the attitude." Martin, Bottum says admiringly, was a "weirdo", a misfit even within this group of misfits, who often enjoyed wearing multiple pairs of glasses at once. "We were total extremes," says Bottum. "He was a total redneck, a macho, gun totin', truck drivin' dude. I was a fruity, open-minded gay guy. We fought all the time, but I really liked him."

Love, meanwhile, was replaced by Chuck Mosley, an old bandmate of Gould's. "Whenever we'd play in LA, Chuck would hang out," says Gould. "So we said, 'Hey, there's a microphone, there's some beer, just start screaming.' He was never a 'singer', but he had a great persona on-stage, charming and really funny."

Their debut album arrived in 1985, the maiden release by San Francisco indie Mordam Records. Its title track, We Care A Lot, was Faith No More's first great song, welding Martin's heavy-rock guitar to sparse funk and a rap puncturing of the pomposity of the Live Aid generation through its blackened lyricism. "We care a lot about disease/Baby, Rock Hudson, rock!" sang Mosley on the track released in the same year that the actor became the first high profile victim of AIDS.

"We were very sarcastic," says Bottum, in glorious understatement. "And that's where We Care A Lot came from: it drew on the stuff we loved – Soulsonic Force, Kraftwerk, the first Run-D.M.C. album – while poking fun at modern culture and the media, stuff we thought was stupid."

Piper Ferguson (3), Alamy

Faith No More reborn: (top row, from left) outside the Warfield Theatre in San Francisco and on-stage at the same venue, April 19, 2015; (bottom row, left) with guitarist Jim Martin and the boyish Mike Patton, circa 1989's *The Real Thing*; (bottom row, right) with singer Chuck Mosley (centre).

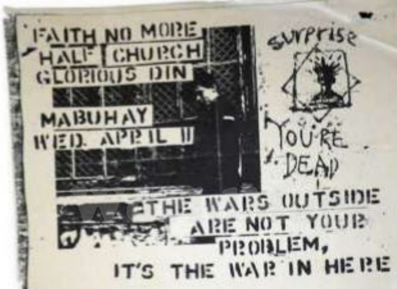
A second album, 1987's *Introduce Yourself*, on Slash Records, refined Faith No More's multifarious formula, but, says Gould, "Morale was horrible." The source of the misery was Mosley, who often arrived at gigs with the band already on-stage, and, apparently exhausted, fell asleep on-stage before an influential industry audience at the *Introduce Yourself* launch party at LA's Club Lingerie.

"I exploded at him a couple of times," says Gould. "We were at a gas station in Kentucky once, we'd driven all night, and he yelled at me, and I kicked him, and he started swinging at me like a wild man, and he broke his finger on the steering wheel. He was a good friend; I literally loved the guy. But we just had to make a change."

"WHEN DID I REALISE I HAD A REMARKABLE voice?" asks Mike Patton, archly raising an eyebrow in the Warfield dressing room. He repeats what appears to him to be a stupid question. "There's not these watershed moments that look great in print. It's a process. I've got a muscle, I got to exercise it. Most people run on a treadmill; I scream."

The voice Patton's currently down playing is widely recognised as one of rock's finest, its six-octave range the result of years of training. You can hear it in nascent form on YouTube footage as a 14-year-old Patton sings Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and Mötley Crüe with his band Gemini at Eureka High School's 1984 talent show. A year later, he formed Mr Bungle with schoolmate Trey Spruance. "We were really into death metal and hardcore," says Patton. "But it came out like we were almost a comedy troupe."

Four years on, the Humboldt County native found himself in the abandoned animal hospital in San Francisco that Faith No More were using as both living quarters and rehearsal space. "He was like this innocent ➢



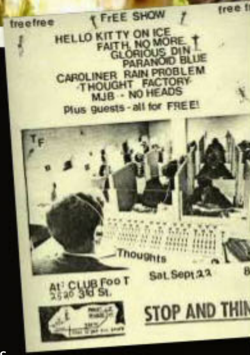
FAITH NO MORE
HALF CHURCH
GLORIOUS DIN
MABUHAY
WED. APRIL 11
surprise
YOU'RE DEAD
THE WARS OUTSIDE
ARE NOT YOUR
PROBLEM,
IT'S THE WAR IN HERE

WARDANCE!

EYEWITNESS! David Katz on the birth of Faith No More.

It's around 4pm on a non-descript afternoon in February 1984. In the stark neon-lit concrete confines of The Depot, a hipster café in the Students Union of San Francisco State University, no more than 30 people await the arrival of an unknown outfit on to the small stage.

Three intense young men appear, without a guitarist or vocalist in sight, but the music they begin to make is surprisingly heavy, strangely joyous. The first thing that hits you is the incredible drum sound, the swirling circular patterns made by Mike Bordin with his floor toms denting the very plates of your skull. He and bassist Bill Gould have an obvious musical rapport, and as the drum patterns tighten and cymbal crashes come to the fore, Gould alternates between grumbling bass pulses and intermittent power chords. Meanwhile, keyboardist Roddy Bottum (a fellow student, it will later transpire) chimes in with eerie four-note melody lines in a set that features wordless, early takes on songs that will morph into Why Do You Bother, The Jungle and Greed. The absence of vocals means more musical interplay than on the versions that subsequently appear on *We Care A Lot*. The band's blend of post-punk, experimental jazz and dub reggae with lesser metal influences is difficult to pigeonhole, but it is hard to believe that this is only their third or fourth show.



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STOP AND THI

In the weeks that follow, other impressive gigs with an expanded line-up at clubs like the Mabuhay Gardens and its upstairs offshoot, the On Broadway, impress as Faith No More develop their sound and attitude. Still building on the same repertoire, each performance is significantly different, and improvisation always the order of the day. Guitarist Mark Bowen arrives and provides understated psychedelic melodies from the sidelines, and then longstanding band roommate Courtney Love takes on vocal duties. A remarkable visual spectacle, she never really gels with the group and is soon gone.

By the time my short-lived band, Thought Factory, share the stage with Faith No More at Club Foot in September 1984, they are heading in a different direction, with singer Chuck Mosley at the helm of a much more obviously rock and pop-orientated beast. Yet they retain the qualities that made them so appealing in the first place, channelling a multitude of influences to yield something strikingly different – something they continue to do to this day.

Present company: Faith No More, 2015 (from left): Mike Patton, Mike Bordin, Bill Gould, Jon Hudson, Roddy Bottum. "It's like Sinatra said: the second time around, the love is lovelier," says Bordin, of their reformation.

⋜ 19-year-old," remembers Gould. "He must have been thinking, 'What the fuck am I getting myself into?'"

Patton had earlier handed the group a Mr Bungle demo tape at a gig in Humboldt, "because I thought they would get a laugh out of it." Months later, he started receiving bizarre phone messages from Jim Martin. "He was like a poet, it was free-association wordplay," laughs Patton. "I would play them to the band. We thought they might take us on tour. But Jim wanted me to be the new singer. I bet he thought I was some beer-bellied, mean redneck motherfucker."

Faith No More played Patton their new music. Compared to Mr Bungle, the songs were "almost like pop", remembers Patton, "and the chord-progressions reminded me of soul music. Death metal soul music? *That's* not going to work." But as he improvised vocals over the nascent tunes, Patton realised, "It worked really good!"

"Mike had such diversity. He could really sing," remembers Bottum. "And he had a similar sense of humour, laughing at the same things we were laughing at. It was super-clear he was a game-changer. 'This is what we sound like with a real singer?'"

"He was this young, innocent-looking kid," adds Gould. "Our managers were like, 'Ooh, we can sell this.' But he really did 'get' it."

Patton's first album with the group, 1989's *The Real Thing* was Faith No More's most accessible release yet, though weirdness still coursed beneath its polished funk-rock surface, also harbouring brutal death metal stomps, sinister doo wop excursions and a gonzoid thrash-prog instrumental entitled Woodpecker From Mars that Bottum refers to as "sort of our take on the cinematic soundscapes of the Lawrence Of Arabia score."

The band spent 10 months touring the album; success was elusive, except in Britain. "I think we played England five times," says Gould, "a bigger venue every time." However, a manic 1990 show at London's Astoria, where fans swarmed the stage convinced label bigwigs to invest one final bundle of cash in promoting the album. A video was shot for Epic, and MTV finally fell for Patton's All-American skate-punk looks and the track's genius fusion of brat-rap and brawn-rock. *The Real Thing* began selling 20,000 copies a week, en route to sales that would top a million in the US alone.

This long-awaited success, however, proved bittersweet for the group. "*The Real Thing* found an audience with the metal kids, which was great," says Gould. "But we were being perceived as something we weren't. And when it came time for the follow-up, people were baying for *The Real Thing* 'Part II', and we didn't want to make it."

But two years spent on the road promoting *The Real Thing* exacted its own price. "I'm sure it scarred us all, turned us into cockroaches rather than human beings," says Puffy. "It drives you insane. And then you make an album like *Angel Dust*…"

"WE DREW ON STUFF WE LOVED… SOUL-SONIC FORCE, KRAFTWERK, RUN-D.M.C."
RODDY BOTTUM

RELEASED IN JUNE 1992, IN THE ERA OF LOLLAPAlooza and Nirvana's crossover success, *Angel Dust* was an explicit response to the success engendered by *The Real Thing*, a repudiation of whatever their new fans perceived Faith No More as being. "There was this gross miscalculation that we were some 'mall metal' band," scowls Patton. "We needed to be who we were," adds Gould. "We wanted to use this moment to do something *cool*, something *badass*."

Hitherto polymorphous, on *Angel Dust* Faith No More got perverse. Gone was the glossy funk metal of yore, replaced by a brilliantly incongruous riot of ideas, ricocheting between bangers that sounded like rave music on a battlefield (A Small Victory), waltzing Waitsian character-sketches (RV), ballistic industrial scourges (Malpractice). Patton was now as likely to scream, gurgle and howl as croon. "We wanted to go as far as we could," says Puffy, of the album's ambitions. "Evolve. That's what we thought we were supposed to do."

The response from management and the label was disheartening. "We played them the album, and they said, 'I hope you didn't buy houses already'," deadpans Patton.

There was dissension within, too: Jim Martin, whose heavy rock moves shaped *The Real Thing*'s success, saw no reason to change direction, telling journalists he didn't like the new album. "That's when the rift became irreversible," says Gould. "Jim became a threat to our existence."

A lengthy global tour with Guns N'Roses only underlined their misfit status. "We really fucked with GN'R," says Bottum. "We got kicked off the tour several times for talking shit about them in the press. Backstage at every show they had jacuzzis and fake beaches populated by strippers the road-crew had given laminates the night before. It was bananas. We just laughed at how fucking ridiculous they were."

Patton rebelled against his metal pin-up image, hacking off his locks, hiding his boyish good-looks behind a bristling chin-beard, and regaling credulous journalists with tales of shitting in hotel hand-dryers and drinking bootfuls of his own piss on-stage. "It was just me having fun and cracking up my band-members," he says, down playing the stories but stopping short of denying them. "We freaked a lot of people out, but I'd realised, I'm not this person they think I am, and I can mess with them."

In July 1993, the band headlined the inaugural Phoenix Festival in Stratford-Upon-Avon, the final date of the Angel Dust tour. Bottum, hardly ever 'in-the-closet', had recently been 'outed' by the rock press, and asked the crowd, "heard any good rumours lately? It's all true! Jim is gay!" "Everybody's quitting!" added Patton. "It's all over! It feels great!"

Fired that November, Jim Martin never played onstage with

Piper Ferguson (5)

Faith No More again. “It’s like a high school break-up,” Gould says. “There’s a lot of pride involved. He maintains he quit the band.”

Gould had hoped that Martin’s exit would knit the remaining members closer together. Instead, Bottum sat out much of 1995’s *King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime*, reeling from the deaths of both his father and close friend Kurt Cobain, and entering rehab for heroin addiction. “I didn’t handle it well,” says a regretful Gould. “I got angry at Roddy, like he was holding us back.” “It was our first real test,” nods Patton, who says the band were “all on different pages.”

Patton remembers “a funereal vibe” to the sessions for their sixth full-lengther, 1997’s *Album Of The Year*. “It seemed like a sad time. It’s a sombre record, I think we knew we were at the end.” “Nobody in our camp gave a shit about us, gave us any support at all,” adds Gould. The group toured for most of 1997. By spring the next year, the game was up.

The end came with a meeting at Bill Gould’s house. Patton arrived with a bottle of champagne. “I had a speech memorised, I wanted to make a ceremony out of it. And these guys look at me like I was fucking crazy and said, ‘Why are you so upset? We agree with you!’”

There were, they say, no real regrets. “There was a waning of interest,” says Bottum, “and when that happens between close friends, it’s contagious. We all had other stuff we wanted to do. We were ready to turn our backs on it.”

PUFFY SAYS THE MEMBERS ALL HAD “JOBS THAT KEPT us busy” during the years after the split. He drummed for Ozzy Osbourne, Bottum pursued his indie rock group Imperial Teen, Gould and Patton started their own labels (Koolarrow and Ipecac, respectively), while Patton also juggled noise-rock supergroups, collaborations with Björk, Norah Jones and Massive Attack, an album of covers of ’50s and ’60s Italian pop, and a plethora of other projects, and Gould produced a number of acts.

If, during those fallow years, there was any demand for a Faith No More reunion, Patton didn’t hear about it. “Maybe I was sheltered from it.” “Our old agent sometimes hit me up,” says Gould. “But I wasn’t even really talking to the guys at that time. We weren’t enemies or anything, there was just a lot of baggage that came with our relationship. The situation had gotten very frustrating towards the end, and it was nice to take a vacation from it.”

Patton says it took “a growing-up phase” before he found himself in touch with his old bandmates again. “It took time. And also realising I’d spent half of my fucking life with these guys, and actually I really *do* like them, and what we did was actually pretty good. We just had to bury some stuff first.”

When it came, the reunion was, unsurprisingly, tentative. “We were super-conscious,” says Patton. “Like, ‘Reunions? Who ever does those well? Nobody!’” “It was strange, how natural it all felt,” admits Gould. “Thirteen years went by, and we’re still telling the same jokes.” Still, no one took anything for granted, and there were no guarantees the reunion would remain ongoing. “On that first batch of shows, all I wanted to do was to say ‘Thank you’ to the fans,” says Puffy. “Because I didn’t think we were going to do any more at that point.”

Things seemed to run out of steam after a final show at London’s Brixton Academy in July 2012. Outwardly, the group remained dormant through 2013. Summer 2014, however, found them supporting Black Sabbath at Hyde Park’s British Summer Time festival. Unexpectedly, their set featured two brand new songs – the slow-grind sleaze of Motherfucker (which became their ‘comeback’ track and, in typically provocative style, unplayable on the radio) and the schizophrenic thrash of Superhero – in the vintage setlist.

“I always thought we had more music in us, even when we split up,” says Gould. “I was hoping there would be a creative part to the reunion. Still, there was hesitation within the band to do anything to cash in on the reunion; we were just reconnecting as people, to bring cynicism into it… No.”

Late in 2012, and in secret, they began to work on the new songs, which took shape slowly. “We don’t all live in the same place,” says Gould, who helmed sessions at the group’s Oakland rehearsal space with Puffy and guitarist Jon Hudson (a member since *Album Of The Year*). Bottum sometimes travelled in to contribute ideas and work on the material, or e-mailed in parts he’d recorded at home in NYC. “We’d get a lot of the music together before Patton jumped in and started working on it. We weren’t exactly all jamming in a room together,” he says. Despite its genesis and their fractured past, it’s clear *Sol Invictus* is the product of communal creativity and genuine focus.

“If we didn’t like what we came up with, we wouldn’t make a record,” Gould says. “That was the bottom line.” “It was a super-scary proposition,” adds Bottum. “I didn’t want to hear that new Pixies album because chances are, they were going to fuck it up. But it was time to do something fresh, or stop doing it altogether. I think we pulled it off, in a good way.”

Revisiting their eclectic, cinematic sound while discovering new vistas and – most crucial of all – preserving their uniquely twisted, darkly sardonic character, *Sol Invictus* has elicited universal praise, emerging as Faith No More’s strongest album since *Angel Dust*. And the group know it.

For Puffy, the most philosophical member, this creative rebirth is the product of the tough times in-between. “It took us breaking up to get here,” he says. “To clean the slate. Because the baggage was piling up and most of it, in hindsight, was fucking petty.”

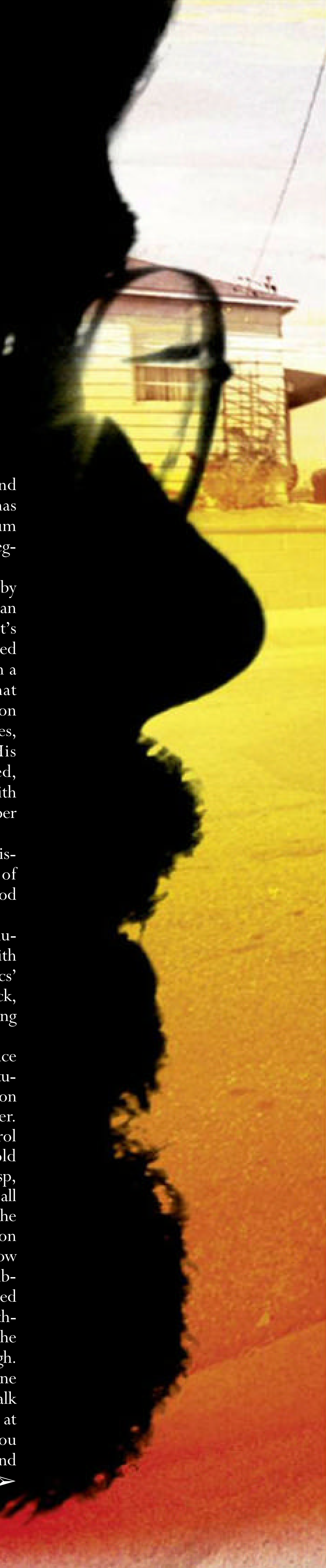
So is there a future beyond *Sol Invictus*? “I hate to talk about that shit, I don’t want to jinx it,” says Puffy. “But it’s like Sinatra said: the second time round, love is lovelier, it’s all so much better, and that’s cool.”

As far as Faith No More are concerned, then, the future really is unwritten. Only a fool would try to guess where it takes them next.

The American Dream

A '70s US pop prodigy, Emitt Rhodes' shining career was laid low by illness, depression and a series of Faustian contracts. Now, 40 years on, he's back, with a new LP and a few outstanding scores to settle.

Words: Paul Myers
Portrait: Kurt Ingham



IT'S FEBRUARY 1971, AND AS the wider world still adjusts to a post-Beatles reality, in Los Angeles the scene is buzzing about a local boy some are calling the American McCartney. Like his UK counterpart, Emitt Rhodes has recently left his band to record a solo LP, entirely alone, at home. Beatle-cute, and just as melodically inclined, the 21-year-old Rhodes has just cracked the US Top 30, and is currently packing them in at a six-night residency at West Hollywood's Troubadour. Backed by sidemen, the shows go swimmingly, but something isn't right; he seems distracted, and publicly shares his concern that all the shows and interviews are taking him away from the urgent business of recording a follow-up album.

Such fears are not wholly unfounded. Rhodes is already a year behind in delivering the record, slowed in no small part by the one-man-band approach that made the *Emitt Rhodes* LP so singular. By December, as he steps on-stage at New York's Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center, having released the second album, *Mirror*, that spring, he is being sued by his label for breach of contract. By 1973, after delivering a third, *Farewell To Paradise*, he will exit both the label and his recording career, and recede into obscurity, compounded by bouts of depression, diabetes, two divorces and further legal woes.

"A little glory in the sun," as Rhodes once put it, "and then, boom, right back to reality."

IN STARK CONTRAST TO HIS PERSONAL downfall, Rhodes's legacy endured, as subsequent generations came to revere the pristine ingenuity of his songs. At times, certain Rhodes devotees made noble attempts to resurrect his career, only to see their enthusiasm dashed by circumstance.

Fast forward to September 2014. It is a humid autumn afternoon in the flat, sun-bleached LA suburb of Hawthorne. Having come directly from nearby LAX, MOJO enters the air-conditioned chill and carpeted walls of Rhodes's home studio. It was here the singer tracked his final two albums, across the street from his boyhood home, where he recorded the first. The outer room is a hoarder's paradise of tape boxes, physics textbooks, and dusty recording equipment. He has kept it all, including the harmonium and upright piano he used on his legendary 1970 solo debut.

In the control room, we are met by a white-bearded, grizzly bear of a man extending a friendly hand. At first, it's hard to identify him as the fresh-faced young prodigy peering out through a burned-out window pane on that eponymous debut. But confirmation comes from those piercing dark eyes, now sizing up his inquisitor. His speaking voice is husky, weathered, and his conversation is peppered with barbed comic asides hinting at a deeper sense of resignation.

"I was real good… at making mistakes," he says, "but that's one of those things in life that we're all good at, aren't we?"

With him today is 30-year-old musician Chris Price, the producer (with Fernando Perdomo) of Linda Perhacs' critically acclaimed recent comeback, *The Soul Of All Natural Things*, and presently helming Rhodes's first all-new album in 42 years.

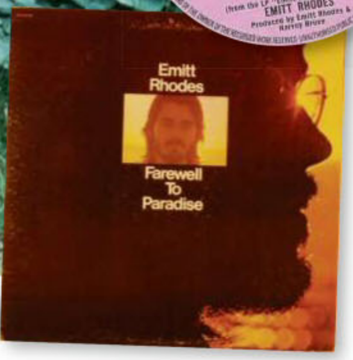
They've known each other since 2006, when Price sought out Rhodes as a fan. Watching them in the studio it soon becomes clear that theirs is a father-son relationship, the son producing his mentor father. Price plays us some finished songs, and the control room speakers fill with the sound of 64-year-old Emitt Rhodes. His voice has matured into a gruff rasp, but his intonation and gift for melody are, against all odds, still intact. Bloodied but not quite beaten; the emotional impact is demonstrable. Today's session sees them recording a cover of the Bee Gees hit How Can You Mend A Broken Heart for an upcoming tribute project (the single, issued on red vinyl, was teased out for Record Store Day in April). The Gibb brothers' plaintive lyric feels particularly poignant given the four heartbreaking decades Rhodes has lived through.

Having perused past interviews with Rhodes, one half expects to find a bitter grouch, reluctant to talk about the past. ("It's a horror story," he snapped at WFMU's Michael Shelley in 2010. "What do you fuckin' want? I'm so disappointed in the world and myself. I'm a depressed person.") Today finds ➢

“It was that question, ‘Do you want to be a star?’ I suppose the idea seemed attractive to me.”: Emitt Rhodes, April 1971, in front of his home/studio in Torrance, California.

American dreamer: Rhodes (left, centre front) with The Merry-Go-Round, circa 1968; (above) Emitt aged nine, at 132nd Street, Hawthorne, LA, Christmas 1959; (right) signed to Dunhill as a

PROBE
PRO 529
WITH MY FACE ON THE FLOOR
(Rhodes)
(from the LP "Emitt Rhodes" SPBA 6256)
EMITT RHODES
Produced by Emitt Rhodes & Harvey Bruce

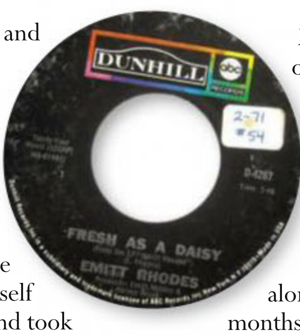


≺ him amiable and talkative, but an air of cautious optimism remains.

Born in Decatur, Illinois in 1950, Rhodes's family moved to Hawthorne when he was five. He has remained there ever since. He alludes to regular beatings from his welder father, yet the move to Hawthorne also played a positive role in his life. The Beach Boys were the older kids in the neighbourhood; later, Debbie Harry went to his high school. Was there something in the water?

"There's this refinery to our west which is probably letting off all sorts of toxic gases all day long," Rhodes says, drily. "Seriously, it must be happenstance; there was a lot of bands in the South Bay area. When I first started playing, I was in the Beaudoin brothers [Dick, Don and John] band, The Emeralds. I had green drums. Dennis Wilson lived just down the block. He broke my drum pedal, broke my drum-head. The guy was fast and loose, but look at him now… what can I say?"

"Was it a farewell album? You're damn right! I was burnt. I had nothing."



Rhodes's first taste of fame came when The Emeralds morphed into red-coated, British Invasion-styled Hollywood beat group The Palace Guard. They became the house band at fashionable Sunset Strip hangout, The Hullabaloo. Each night, during their set, Rhodes would step out from his drum kit to sing The Beatles' Michelle, much to the delight of the young ladies in the house. On one such night Russell Shaw introduced himself to Rhodes backstage. Shaw was from A&M Records, and took Rhodes to meet his father, music publisher Eddie Shaw.

"It was that question, 'Do you want to be a star?'" says Rhodes, rolling his eyes. "I suppose the idea seemed attractive to me. So I quit [The Palace Guard], a paying job, and went into the garage to form my own band, The Merry-Go-Round, to record all these songs I had".

While Richard Thompson became an early fan, even covering The Merry-Go-Round's Time Will Show The Wiser with Fairport Convention, Rhodes ditched the group façade after one album. More troubling was the contract he signed with the Shaws. "When I met Russell, he was working in the mail room at A&M," admits Rhodes, "but he worked his way up. His father Eddie, the publisher, signed me to a contract 'in perpetuity' which means forever, and pretty much made me his slave and indentured servant. Eventually he just stopped paying me."

As The Merry-Go-Round were breaking up, Rhodes took a few unreleased tracks, recorded a few more with LA session musicians, and presented them to A&M in an effort to fulfil his contract. The label passed on releasing them, but kept the tapes just in case. Rhodes began making a whole new record, by himself, in the garage behind his parents' home. When these recordings caught the ear of ABC/Dunhill A&R man Harvey Bruce, he told his boss, Jay Lasker, who signed Rhodes to a solo deal, paying him $5,000 for the tapes and hiring studio wizard Curt Boettcher and future star producer Keith Olsen to remix them at Sound City. Rhodes invested the $5,000 in his garage studio.

"I bought myself an old Ampex 4-track," he recalls, beaming. "I loved that machine. It had vacuum tubes. When you turned it on, it would glow. I was a sucker for that glowing thing, and the big knobs and the meters, and microphones. When I recorded *Emitt Rhodes*, I was basically investing in myself. That was kinda how I saw it. I spent any money that I made from the record company on the equipment I used to make my own records. It wasn't very much money."

Multitracking gave Rhodes the freedom to work alone, overdubbing himself on every instrument, working at his own pace. "I was married to the studio," he says. "I would get up in the morning, record until the evening, then go home. I had a limited amount of instruments, and a limited amount of tracks, so I had to plan everything out. It was trial and error. The Beatles were my role models. I just compared everything to them."

Despite his diligence and expediency, recording alone was time consuming; *Emitt Rhodes* took over nine months to record. ABC/Dunhill's contract, on the other hand, called for him to deliver a new product every six. "It was a Herculean task," Rhodes admits, "and it was impossible. It ensured that [Dunhill] had the upper hand at all times. And I had Eddie Shaw representing me… and if there was an agreement, he had me sign it."

Getty, © Emitt Rhodes (2) (courtesy www.scrammagazine.com) Paul Myers

But if Rhodes knew the first record had taken nine months to make, how could he imagine a second would take less? "I obviously couldn't comply," says Rhodes, "and I told [Lasker] that. He said, 'Well, we'll fix it later.' And Jay Lasker liked to put the screws on his artists, and throw his weight around."

Rhodes watched with pride and excitement as *Emitt Rhodes*, the album he'd made in his garage, climbed into the Top 30 on the wings of its bouncy single, Fresh As A Daisy. A buzz was building. The only thing that could slow it down was the release of a competing album by… Emitt Rhodes. A&M, eager to capitalise on this rising star, rushed out *The American Dream*, their own Rhodes album, culled from unreleased Merry-Go-Round tapes. The marketplace was confused, which effectively killed the momentum of his ABC/Dunhill album. From that point on, Rhodes's career was a study in diminishing returns. To make matters worse, when he finally delivered his heavier follow-up album, *Mirror*, later in 1971, relations with the label had become frosty. ABC/Dunhill launched a $250,000 lawsuit for breach of contract.

"I wasn't being rewarded," says Rhodes. "I was even told by people like Eddie Shaw that I wasn't any good; I was a bum. Somewhere along the line, I figured out that wasn't the case, but I was like 14 or 15 when I met these people. There's a whole bunch of mistakes that you make in your life."

By the time of *Farewell To Paradise*, released in a funk of litigious rancour in 1973, Rhodes was done.

"Was it a farewell album?" Rhodes asks, in mock incredulity. "You're damn right it was. I was burnt! But I had nothing, so what were they gonna take?"

Instinctively, Rhodes fled to the other side of the glass, accepting Chuck Plotkin's offer to become a house engineer/producer for Elektra.

"They gave me this studio Mike Nesmith had put together," says Rhodes. "It was basically a long rectangular garage, with living rooms, bedrooms, a kitchen and dining rooms. He'd turned a bedroom into a control room. It even had a pool; it was a wonderful place. I think I made some fine recordings there."

But then, in the 1980s, after releasing his own single, Isn't It So, Rhodes left Elektra to work independently from his home studio and ostensibly to raise a family. After one marriage ended in divorce, he married again, only to divorce again. Additionally, Rhodes was diagnosed as a diabetic, and after a minor car crash (with his daughter in the car), attributed to a diabetic coma, he gave up driving for good. He says he still doesn't see his children. As depression and diabetes built a wall around his psyche, Rhodes busied himself with science textbooks, dabbled in electronic inventions, and watched a lot of television. If he had any ideas for songs he'd put them on a cassette and file them away in a manila envelope. On the legal front, nothing had been resolved and, despite his growing reputation as one of pop's unsung geniuses, he wasn't being rewarded financially.

Then, in 2001, a friend informed him that filmmaker Wes Anderson had used Rhodes's song Lullabye in The Royal Tenenbaums, and that there would likely be money owing to him.

"I called up Universal," Rhodes recalls, "and the person I spoke to said they knew nothing about it. Then half an hour later Mark Shaw, the surviving son of the Shaws, called me up and told me about it."

The younger Shaw offered Rhodes a better deal, which Rhodes accepted despite considering it still grossly unfair. Today, he credits his publishing administrator, Evan Cohen, for diverting at least a trickle of the lost revenue stream his way.

"He sends me cheques at least," Rhodes cackles, "whereas when The Bangles recorded Live [in 1984], Eddie just sent me a letter that said, 'I'm not gonna pay you for this song any more.' I said, You weren't paying me for anything anyway!"

In 2010, Rhodes recorded four tunes featuring the likes of Richard Thompson and Bangles Vicki and Debbi Peterson. Shortly after that project fell apart, in a heap of still-ongoing litigation, Chris Price paid Rhodes a visit. Over the course of his commiseration, Price asked Rhodes about the legal-sized manila envelopes all around his room.

"Each one of them," says Price, "contained a tape of a single song, with lead sheets and multiple drafts of lyrics. Emitt played me a few and they were just too good. So I said, You've gotta let me help you make a record of this stuff. I'll get friends of mine who are superfans and we'll make a record in your house. They didn't need a dime to do it. They just really wanted to play on a record with Emitt Rhodes."

And so it was that Rhodes, Price and Perdomo, assisted by a strike force of talented devotees – including former Jellyfish members Jason Falkner and Roger Joseph Manning Jr – cut the first seven songs, live off the floor, in one marathon day last year.

"It was remarkable," says Rhodes. "It had all the energy that I had lost about 20 years ago. It's brilliant fucking shit, and Chris is a fucking genius."

Deflecting the praise, Price says that while this new record musically approximates what Rhodes might have sounded like in, say, 1978, there's no way he could have made it back then.

"There's a lived-in quality to his voice," says Price, "because these songs are about experience. These are the songs you write after you've lived a lot."

"I used to be able to do all that falsetto stuff those Bee Gees did," adds Rhodes, "but no, I can't do it no more, I'm old. I don't hold notes, I'm not Ella Fitzgerald, and I don't know how to do any of that shit. All I know how to do is deliver a line; and hopefully the line is important."

The court is out as to whether this flush of good fortune can finally lure him out on the road, but for the first time in years, Emitt Rhodes has something to be hopeful about. Nonetheless, for now, he is managing his expectations.

"I just want to be able to afford a good lawyer," he laughs, "so I can put these guys who are suing me in the poor house. All I know is you write a song because it means something to you and you want to share it. That's it. Look, I've sweated these fucking words and lived these goddamn melodies; I know this fucking shit like I know my soul."

Rhodes Show

Producer Chris Price hails Emitt's classic albums.

The Merry-Go-Round

The Merry-Go-Round

(A&M, 1967)

★★★★

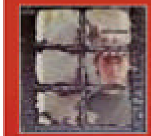
Time Will Show The Wiser makes great use of stereo space, reverse acoustic guitars, sped-up banjo, the flutter of a harp. The orchestral elements used indicates a band capable of more than jangly guitar pop.

Emitt Rhodes

Emitt Rhodes

(Dunhill, 1970)

★★★★★



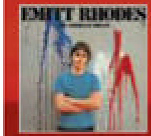
A powerpop touchstone and one of the greatest one-man-band albums of all time. Rhodes' decision to record at home by himself was revolutionary. It truly does not get any better than this.

Emitt Rhodes

The American Dream

(A&M, 1971)

★★★★



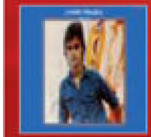
A contractual obligation to A&M, with previously unreleased Merry-Go-Round recordings plus a handful of solo recordings with top session musicians. The most unique Emitt Rhodes solo album.

Emitt Rhodes

Mirror

(Dunhill, 1971)

★★★★



A lesser collection than his debut as Emitt was forced to abandon his perfectionist methods. The material is naturally less focused, but also more immediate and direct, so we get confidence and swagger.

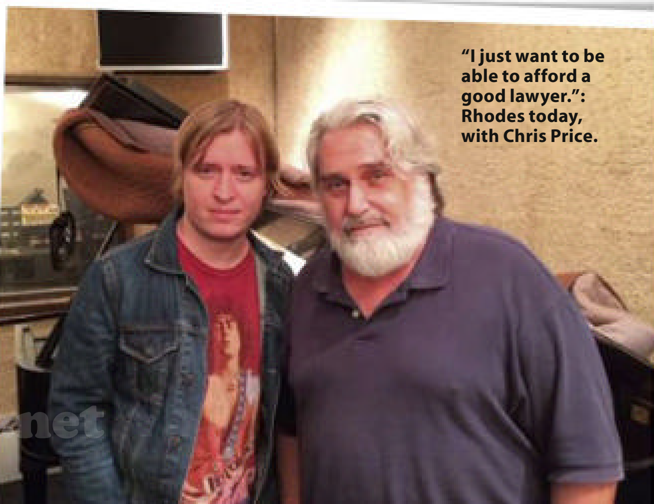
Emitt Rhodes

Farewell To Paradise

(Dunhill, 1973)

★★★

Emitt's final statement for four decades. Immaculately recorded yet somewhat uneven, it nonetheless has some insanely good material.



"I just want to be able to afford a good lawyer.": Rhodes today, with Chris Price.

SO FAR AWAY

WHEN AMY WINEHOUSE DIED IN JULY 2011, SHE WAS POISED TO WORK ON AN ALBUM OF "BEAUTIFUL" BATTLE RAPS AND A JAZZ PROJECT WITH QUESTLOVE AND MOS DEF.

IN THE WAKE OF A NEW DOCUMENTARY TOM DOYLE SPEAKS TO FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COLLABORATORS ABOUT AMY'S SHORT MUSICAL LIFE AND HER GRAND CREATIVE DREAMS.

PORTRAIT: ROSS KIRTON

Blake's

FEBRUARY 2003 AND IN THE offices of Island Records a new female singer-songwriter, signed to the label just two months previously, is about to give an acoustic performance for the assembled employees. The 19-year-old Amy Winehouse sits on the lip of a sofa, unfussily dressed in black top, jeans and brown high-heeled boots. Chewing gum, she starts nervously fiddling with her black wavy shoulder-length hair.

"This is I Heard Love Is Blind," she tentatively announces. "I'll just clip my hair out the way because it gets in my mouth. I wrote this in Miami with a guy called Salaam and… I'm pretty proud of it."

Accompanying herself on a cream-coloured guitar, she starts to sing the song – a jazzy, mischievous tale of drunken infidelity, which opens with the words, "I couldn't resist him/His eyes were like yours/His hair was exactly your shade of brown." As she carefully moves between barre chords and more tricksy inversions, her voice is a thing of wonder, an echo from another age. A smile begins to play on her lips with the lines, "He's just not as tall/But I couldn't tell/It was dark and I was lying down."

She doesn't flinch as she offers the blunt revelation, "I was thinking of you when I came". Two minutes in, she lets rip, with the skewed declaration, "It's not cheating/You were on my mind", before closing with a deft and soulful trill as she delivers the knowing payoff line which gives the song its title. There follows enthusiastic applause from the record company onlookers, as Winehouse shakes her head almost dismissively. Then she smiles. She knows she's got them.

This filmed scene appears early in *Amy*, the forthcoming cinematic documentary by Asif Kapadia (director of the BAFTA-winning *Senna*). As a snatched camcorder reminder of Winehouse's oft-overlooked musicianly skills and headgame-playing approach to confessional songwriting, it makes for riveting viewing.

"It was a genuine jaw-dropping moment," says Winehouse's then-manager, Nick Shymansky. "You could see people at the label thinking, What the fuck is this? We'd had quite a lot of rejections and finally we'd signed the deal. It was a really happy time for us."

In an early signifier of what was to come, however, it was a happiness which wasn't built to last. A year later, frustrated by the disappointing sales of her debut album, *Frank*, the characteristically bolshy singer gave an interview in which she derided the people at Island, calling them "idiots".

"But they're nice idiots," she added. "So you can't be like, 'You're an idiot.' They know that they're idiots."

"It killed the buzz," laughs Shymansky today, a touch despairingly. "People were saying they'd never work with her again, who the fuck did she think she was? You couldn't have hoped for a better vibe from a label for your artist and she just shot it out of the sky."

AMY WINEHOUSE WAS ALWAYS TROUBLE. HUGELY talented, highly charismatic, but trouble nonetheless. Born in 1983 in north London to parents Mitch and Janis Winehouse, both of Russian Jewish origin, she was a handful, even as a child. To go along with her inherent attitude, Juliette Ashby, her lifelong friend from the age of four, remembers that as a kid Winehouse always had her nose in a book.

"She was so intelligent for her age," she recalls. "She was reading all the time…not children's books, adult books. Always had her head down reading. Her intelligence astounded me as kids."

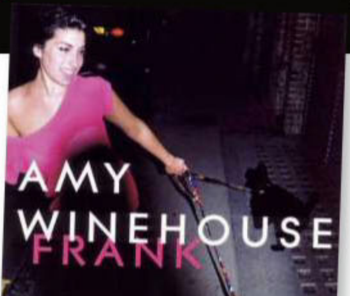
At the same time, she was compelled by music. As precocious 10-year-olds, Winehouse and Ashby styled themselves as a Salt-N-Pepa-inspired hip hop duo, Sweet 'N' Sour (with Amy casting herself as the latter). Winehouse's first studio experience came when, impressed, Ashby's stepfather Alan Glass, a US producer and composer who'd written for Aretha Franklin and Al Green, offered to record the pair's efforts.

"SHE SAID TO ME 'DO YOU LIKE PEOPLE LIKE THELONIUS MONK?' DINAH WASHINGTON, DONNY HATHAWAY, SHE CONNECTED WITH THEM ON A DEEP, RAW EMOTIONAL LEVEL."

SAM BESTE

"To be honest, for two north London 10-year-old girls we had some serious skills," says Ashby. "The American accent down and clever lyrics. We were just two hyperactive kids. We couldn't wait to get on the mike. It was such a special time for us… definitely something that shaped us as kids."

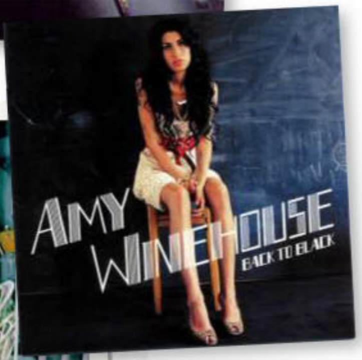
After hip hop, Winehouse was turned onto jazz by her part-time pub crooner father. "My dad liked Sarah Vaughan, a lot of Sinatra, Tony Bennett," she told this writer in 2007. "Then when I was about 13 or 14 my brother [Alex, three years older] was listening to a lot of jazz. I guess I learnt to sing with soloists. Sax solos and stuff like that."

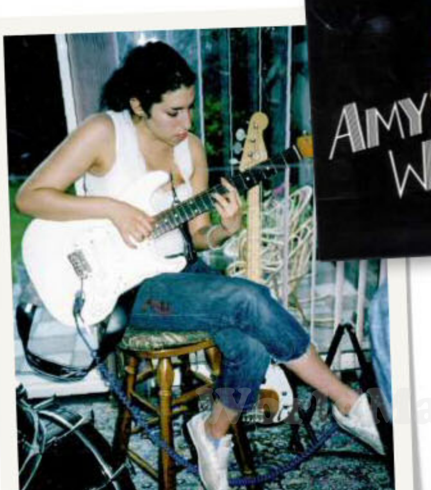


Naturally rebellious, she didn't fare well at Ashmole secondary school in Southgate, leading to a fateful argument with the deputy head teacher. "I was just trying to wind him up," Amy recalled. "I went (*cartoon sneer*), I'm gonna go to stage school. And he goes, 'Amy, stage school is a fantasy… it's not what people really do.'"

But in her case, her talent already radiating, Winehouse managed to secure a scholarship to attend the Sylvia Young Theatre School from the age of 13. Although confrontationally mouthy, in truth Amy was always self-doubting.

"What I learnt at Sylvia Young's," she confessed, "was how to put yourself forward for things and think, Yeah, I *am* good and I *can* do this." ➢





Back before Black: (from top) Amy in 1993, aged 10; Winehouse's two studio albums, 2003's *Frank* and *Back To Black* from 2006; and (left) aged 20, in 2003; (opposite) Mischa Richter's contact sheet from the cover shoot for her aforementioned hit album *Back To Black* – it was the last set taken that day, easy to spot the shot chosen.

Contact sheet courtesy of Mischa Richter, Splash, Lauren Gilbert, Typeface design Alex Hutchinson

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THE LEGENDARY ROOTS CREW

Camden
CAMDEN SQUARE NW1

Made in Manhattan: Amy in New York, 2007; (clockwise from below) singing coach Annabel Williams; Amy with best friend Juliette Ashby; with Mos Def; with Dale Davies; with Questlove; with father Mitch, 2006; Salaam Remi; with Nick Shymansky in 2003; Darcus Reese; outside her house; on-stage with Mark Ronson

Walt Disney World

◄ At 16, she enrolled on the musical theatre course at The BRIT School in Croydon, but quickly grew disenchanted. "I walked out," she said. "I just thought, Fuck this. I admittedly did the wrong course. I should have done music." Instead, she began attending Saturday morning National Youth Jazz Orchestra sessions at the Cockpit Theatre in Marylebone, where she was given the chance to sing with a big band.

"She was this moody, chubby, Jewish-looking teenager," says Annabel Williams, her singing coach with the NYJO. "She seemed fairly quiet and uninterested. Amy first stood out to me when she was in the centre of all the musicians and started singing. I was just like, Woah, she's amazing. She absolutely nailed it I was so impressed."

From here, Winehouse began performing back-room pub sets, facing a crowd with just her voice and acoustic guitar. At the same time, she began guesting with a loose north London collective called The Bolsha Band, through which she met her long-term live keyboard-player Sam Beste.

"She said to me, 'Do you like Thelonious Monk?'" Beste recalls. "People like Dinah Washington and Ray Charles and Donny Hathaway, she really connected with those musicians on a very deep, emotional, raw level. There was a strange awkwardness about Amy. Even in those early days when we were playing the small clubs, she wasn't really engaging with an audience in the way that an entertainer would. She was a bit in her own world."

Through a singer friend, Tyler James, 16-year-old Amy came to the attention of Nick Shymansky, then a teenage scout at Simon Fuller's 19 management company, who had designs on matching James with a female singer to create a Marvin Gaye/Tammi Terrell-styled soul duo. Shymansky chased and chased the reluctant Winehouse, finally managing to pin her down. "She wasn't very nice on the phone," he remembers, though warmly. "She was kinda like, 'Who the fuck are you? Why would I wanna meet up with you?' I think her initial reaction was fear."

In time, Amy sent Shymansky a jiffy bag adorned with "probably five hundred childish stickers of hearts" and containing a cassette, which the aspiring manager first played while driving. "It was a cover of Night And Day," he says. "I had to pull over. I remember just thinking, Holy shit. I knew I'd found something really special."

"SHE WAS VERY COMPLEX BUT SHE DIDN'T RATE HERSELF. HER SONGS WERE REALLY, REALLY DARK REALLY SAD, REALLY SELF-CRITICAL."
NICK SHYMANSKY

Winehouse was coy about her own songwriting, but showed Shymansky some poems she'd penned, which yielded still-unheard early compositions such as Estrogenius and the impishly-titled Monkey Not A Boy. Still, Amy seemed deeply unsure when it came to her gifts.

"She was very complex," Shymansky reasons. "A lot of the things that the average person would think were brilliant about her were second nature and therefore unimpressive to her. She didn't rate herself. Her songs were really dark, really sad, really self-critical."

IN EARLY 2002, THE 18-YEAR-OLD AMY WINEHOUSE, accompanied by Nick Shymansky, flew to the States for the first time, landing in Miami. Though it had proved tough for the manager to stir up record company interest in the singer, EMI Music Publishing had funded this trip to Florida for Winehouse to write and record with Fugees/Nas producer Salaam Remi. It was a thrilling time for the pair: riding around in a rented convertible, staying at the art deco Raleigh Hotel on the city's South Beach.

"Salaam just got it from the off," says Shymansky. "He and Amy were jazz and hip hop nuts. One minute they'd jump on the keys, next minute guitar, next minute double bass. Salaam was always a much better player than Amy but he's not a *player* and Amy wasn't a player. It dropped Amy's insecurity that you have to be the most accomplished musician to be respected by other musicians."

Moreover, without attempting to lighten the darkness in Winehouse's songs, Remi encouraged the young singer to enhance the twisted humour in her writing. "What I allowed her to do was really just put wit into her songs," he says in Amy.

In this environment, Winehouse flourished as an unflinchingly candid and luridly caustic songwriter. "Everything about Amy was like one big diary," says Shymansky. "She would be spilling out her views. Sometimes her views were really raw and emotional and sometimes they'd be really funny and piss-taking."

Aside from humour or personal confession, Winehouse pointed the finger at others in the songs which would feature on *Frank*. On Stronger Than Me, she taunted her then-boyfriend Chris Taylor, seven years her senior, for what she perceived as his lack of emotional strength ("Are you gay?" she baitingly wondered). In What Is It About Men, she publicly opened a can of worms, by addressing her parents' separation when she was nine; Mitch leaving Janis after a long-term affair with a work colleague.

"I tend to write songs about things that I can't quite get past," Amy told me. "I wasn't messed up about it. But it was something I was trying to make sense of. He's been asked about it and he's a bit like, 'Well Amy's Amy.'"

"I met my current wife and that was it," Mitch Winehouse stressed when I asked him about the song in 2007. "I didn't have a harem or anything. A lot of my friends find it difficult because we came from the moon-in-June and isn't-love-lovely type of songs. She's someone who sees it slightly differently."

In the end, Amy wasn't entirely satisfied with *Frank*. She moaned about how Island had forced her to include one song she hated, the Erykah Badu-lite of Amy Amy Amy, and claimed the label had "fake strings" overdubbed against her will on the downtempo soul reverie of Take The Box.

"She felt that spoiled the aesthetic of the record," says then A&R manager, now president of Island, Darcus Beese. "No one should be happy with their first album. I always say, How can you be happy with your first album when you're still learning your trade?"

"There was an element of tough love that had to happen to make the record," Nick Shymansky points out. "I'm sure she would've made a record, 'cos she was brilliant. But there was no structure. It may have taken 10 years."

Where Winehouse maintained absolute control was on stage. Dale Davis played bass live with Amy from her second professional gig to her last and remembers being taken aback by their third together in Powis Square at the Notting Hill Carnival in August 2003. "Carnival crowds are never the easiest," he states. "But her performance was so powerful. She didn't need a band on-stage, all she needed was herself and the guitar. Her singing was devastating."

Davis remembers that Winehouse, truly soulful as a performer, never sang a song exactly the same twice, teasing fresh nuances from the material night after night.

"After four or five shows of doing one song, she'd changed the song completely," he says. "You could hear her working the changes every night. I think ultimately that cost her, because she gave so much in performance and in her personal life that she just left herself short. You get a lot of artists who sing the same every night and they preserve themselves as a result. But with someone like Amy, who gave her all every single night, that leads to a bit of burnout."

Touring for *Frank* completed, in January 2005 Amy moved to Camden, at the time a post-Libertines hive of indie hedonism. Seemingly utterly uninterested in writing songs for her second ➤

Juliette Ashby, Rex (2), Ali Spiers Davis, WENN, Film Magic, Jefy Andres Wright, Getty

"WHEN SHE WROTE, THERE WAS NO EDITING. IT CAME OUT, LIKE, THIS IS THE TRUTH AND THIS IS HOW IT'S GONNA STAY."

MARK RONSON

⋞ album, she dossed around, smoked weed, got drunk and played pool for hours each day.

"She'd been busy for five years," says Nick Shymansky, "all of a sudden she wasn't busy. Expectations hadn't been met. Money was tight because we took a loss on the touring. And she'd upset a lot of people."

"I started playing pool all day because I could," Amy remembered with a shrug. "The record company would come and see me playing pool in the pub and they'd be like, 'Do you still want to make a record?' I'm like, Yeah, it's coming, I'm just gonna play pool for three months, yeah?"

AMY WINEHOUSE
REHAB

On the Camden scene, in the summer of 2005, Winehouse first encountered the controversial figure of Blake Fielder-Civil, whose name she impulsively had tattooed onto her left breast. When Fielder-Civil ended their affair to return to his girlfriend at the end of that summer, Amy fell apart, drinking Jack Daniel's from the moment she woke, slumped in a sobbing heap on her kitchen floor. Though in a worrying state, the breakup was the grit which began to produce the songwriting pearls for *Back To Black*.

Winehouse's friend and then-flatmate Juliette Ashby is in no doubt as to why that album was such a creative success.

"Pain," she says. "Pain can make you write like you've never written before. Being happy is wonderful but doesn't get you the music that hits you in the stomach when you hear it."

After 18 months of troubled downtime, according to Salaam Remi, Island had doubts about Winehouse. "The label were considering letting her go," the producer claims in Amy. "She ends up coming back to Miami. Guy Moot [EMI Music Publishing] calls me up. 'Hey, you sure you wanna do this?' I was like, Listen, even if you dropped her, I will pay her to come to my house and sing, 'cos this shit fucking moves me."

"If someone takes three years to write a follow-up," says Darcus Beese from the record company's perspective, "things are gonna be said and people are gonna have opinions. But I can't ever remember someone sitting me down and saying, 'We're gonna drop your act.'"

"She totally didn't drink the whole time she was here," Remi says of the Miami sessions for *Back To Black*. "She sat out in my back garden for four days. She'd take a little notebook and just keep writing."

At the same time, Island also hooked Winehouse up with Mark Ronson in Manhattan. He remembers being warned by people in the industry that the collaboration would likely turn out to be an unproductive nightmare. "They were just like, (*sarcastically*) 'Oh good luck'," he says today. "'I heard she's been working on that record for three years.'"

But, in Miami and New York, Amy was suddenly energised and, working quickly and intensively, bottled lightning. "I was really inspired," says Ronson, remembering their first day together in the studio. "Both by her and the kind of music she was talking about wanting to make, playing The Shangri-Las and stuff. When she left that night I wrote the music for [the song] Back To Black and played it for her the next morning. She was like, '*That's* what I want my album to sound like.' So she wrote Back To Black in, like, three hours."

Getty Images (2), Xposure, Wireimage

Meanwhile Rehab, set to become her comeback single, was written after a conversation with Ronson about her recent problems. It was transformed overnight by the producer from what he describes as "a sort of Johnny Cash Folsom Prison Blues kind of thing. She showed me the chords and went home. So I sped it up and did that '60s picking, strumming thing. She came back in the next day and said, 'Yeah it's cool, it sounds like The Libertines.'"

Ronson still marvels at the memory of watching Winehouse in the moments when she lost herself in songwriting. "The thunderbolt strikes the head, the pen scribbles furiously and that's the song," he says. "When she wrote, there was no editing. It came out, like, this is the truth and this is how it's gonna stay. She never second-guessed that and that's why those lyrics are from another place."

Talking to Amy four months after the release of *Back To Black*, it was clear she knew the album was a triumph.

"I made an album of 11 songs that I'm so proud of," she beamed. "I was listening to a very narrow spectrum of music, so all of the stuff kind of sounds the same. Whereas the first album was a bit of a melting pot, really. When I gave it to the record company, I said, Do whatever you want… first single, second single, third single."

Still, Winehouse was unprepared and ill-equipped for the almost inevitable success of *Back To Black*, which by the end of 2007 had gone six times platinum in the UK alone. With the return of Blake Fielder-Civil, and their marriage in May 2007, Amy's life for the next year-and-a-half became a drug-disorientated, paparazzi-trolled horror show.

Even in February 2008, when briefly clean of illegal substances, but forced to perform her live segment for the Grammys from the Riverside Theatre in Hammersmith after failing a drug test for her US visa, Winehouse seemed unable to enjoy the fact that she'd astonishingly bagged five awards.

"I'm looking at her, trying to get some sort of reaction," remembers Juliette Ashby of that night. "She went, 'Jules, this is so boring without drugs.' And I felt really, really, really sad for her."

IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS, AMY Winehouse struggled to come up with anything substantial for a third album. "She was writing in amongst all the madness that was going on," says Island's Darcus Beese. "You're in a dilemma. You're conflicted between do you get in a place where she's creative and keeping her mind busy? Or do you let her just go away and disappear? I was of the mind that you needed to keep her busy."

As a result, Sam Beste was charged during 2009 with the task of visiting Winehouse once a fortnight at her new home near Enfield in order to just play together and hopefully to inspire her musically. "She was sort of perpetually in this state of distraction," Beste says of these failed sessions. "One time we did actually talk properly and she sort of broke down and started crying and saying that she knew that everything was falling apart and she wanted to sort herself out."

In Winehouse's attic studio, the pair would try to work through soul songs or selections from jazz sheet music bible The Real Book. Alarmingly quickly though, Amy's mind would start to wander. "We'd get three bars into a Donny Hathaway song or something," Beste recalls, "and she would say, 'I'm bored.' Then we'd move onto another song and do that three or four more times and then she'd leave the room. She was just really struggling. Physically and mentally really unwell. It was very hard to know what to do."

The same year, Salaam Remi was flown over to work with Amy in the attic, resulting in sketches for two new songs, Between The Cheats and Like Smoke. In October 2010, when I was interviewing her at the Q Awards, Winehouse was tipsy but bright-eyed and claimed that the album was in fact progressing, naming two new songs, Gutter and Our Souls Ain't Sold. "It's going really well, thank you," she insisted. "What's the style like? I couldn't tell you yet…"

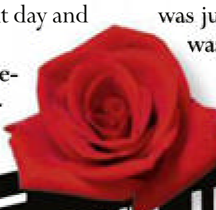
One key moment in the film reveals where her Amy's thoughts lay when it came to stylistically imagining her next record. In a voicemail to Salaam Remi, she is heard buzzing about her recent periods of properly absorbed writing. "I keep coming out with battle raps and they're just pouring out of me," she tells the producer. "Like Wu-Tang stuff, but really neat, very beautifully alliterated little battle raps. I'm fucked up in the head, but I keep coming out with all this stuff all the time, all these lyrics and… I don't know why. But I realise it's for the next album."

If nothing else, this is evidence that Winehouse's fighting spirit seemed to be returning to her. In tandem, she was also planning a jazz project with Mos Def, Raphael Saadiq and Questlove, and would send the latter countless MP3s as reference points. "I thought I had my doctorate in jazz, but no, she taught me a lot," Questlove stresses in Amy. "She, like, assigned homework. 'Study this record, study this record, study this record.'"

While admitting that Winehouse's vocal power had diminished as a result of her indulgences, Dale Davis can picture another direction in which Amy might have headed. "I could've seen her moving towards '70s soul," he says. "She was a massive Minnie Riperton fan and I could've seen her going down that route. But the thing with Amy, 'cos she had that talent, she could've gone anywhere really."

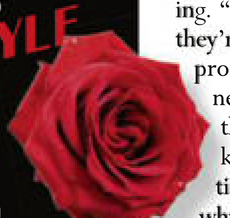
At the very end, out of character, even Amy Winehouse herself seemed to have finally recognised and accepted her rare and precious talent. On Friday, July 22, 2011, the night before Winehouse's heart finally stopped beating, her bodyguard Andrew Morris remembers discovering her watching old footage of herself on YouTube. "She was showing me some clips on her laptop," he painfully remembers in the final moments of Amy. "She said, 'Boy, I can sing.'" Ⓜ

Amy will be in UK cinemas from July 3



SOUL MINING

AMY WINEHOUSE'S LOST GEMS. BY TOM DOYLE



WHAT IT IS

(Frank Deluxe Edition)

Acoustic guitar demo of song which picks through the wreckage of a destroyed relationship. A nape-tingling performance sees Amy take part of the blame ("I'll tell you what you want to hear/It depends on what I've been drinking"), then turn punchy ("I could cut you down again/If you was like all other men").

SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME

(Frank Deluxe Edition)

Amy eerily channels Billie Holiday in this piano and vocal demo which sounds like it was recorded in the 1940s. The line "Tell me where is the shepherd for this lost lamb," is delivered with real poignancy, particularly with the knowledge that it was Winehouse's wish in old age to purely sing jazz standards.

LOVE IS A LOSING GAME

(Back To Black Deluxe Edition)

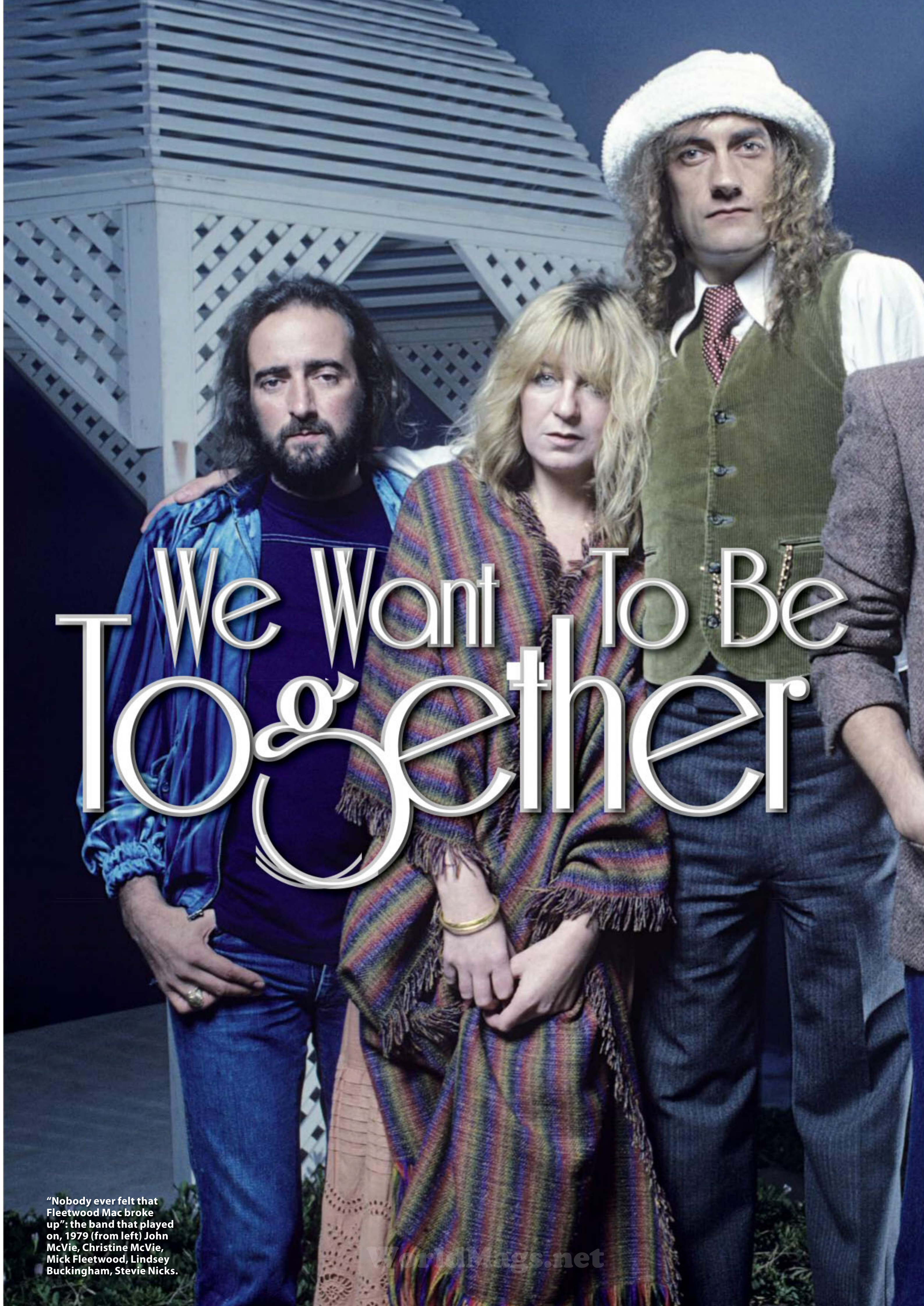
The sound of a modern classic being created, almost in real time. This scrappy, but deeply soulful demo of Winehouse's best song is felt out on a barely-in-tune acoustic guitar, with raw vocal emotion. Recorded evidence of her masterful songwriting in its purest form.

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOU'LL EVER KNOW

(YouTube)

Winehouse dedicates this stirring live rendition of Al Kooper's soul-stripping ballad (recorded by Donny Hathaway on 1973's *Extension Of A Man*) to "my husband". Recorded in the turbulent air which followed *Back To Black*, there's a gutsiness evident here, particularly in the uplift of the middle eight, which recalls Janis or Aretha.

We Want To Be Together



“Nobody ever felt that Fleetwood Mac broke up”: the band that played on, 1979 (from left) John McVie, Christine McVie, Mick Fleetwood, Lindsey Buckingham, Stevie Nicks.

© Norman Seeff

Of all their storied rifts and reconciliations, Christine McVie's return to **FLEETWOOD MAC**, 17 years after her bewildered exit, may be the most extraordinary. And as they stand on the brink of enormous UK shows and even (whisper it) an album, it's the prompt for **all five members** to open up to MOJO. Cue: good times, bad times, "carnage and intrigue", plus a massive rubber dildo called Harold. "There's a lot of love, you know," they tell **JIM IRVIN**.

Photograph by **NORMAN SEEFF**.

IT SHOULDN'T WORK, BUT IT DOES: THE DRUMMER fractionally behind the beat and the bass slightly ahead. For close to 50 years, Mick Fleetwood and John McVie have been locked in their distinctive groove, and upon it they have built and maintained the strange, enduring entity that bears their names.

It's known dizzying triumphs and weathered catastrophe and decline, and for the last 17 years it has had to cope without singer, keyboard player and hit-writer Christine McVie, MIA since end of the 1998 tour which celebrated the reunion of the multiplatinum *Rumours* quintet. At home in England, she effectively shut herself off from her former life. But slowly she realised that she missed it. In 2014, she rejoined the fold.

Better still, she's writing again – collaborating last year with Lindsey Buckingham and Mick Fleetwood as ex-husband John McVie recovered from a bout with colon cancer. Meanwhile, the quorate Mac have been traversing the U.S. with their On With The Show tour, demand for tickets exceeding all expectations. What began as 42 American shows became 80. This month that production arrives in Europe for a run that includes six nights at London's O2 and a headline slot at the Isle of Wight festival.

In 1975, shortly after the release of the self-titled set the current line-up refer to as 'the white album', the quintet undertook its debut tour and a show at the Capitol Centre in Maryland was filmed. You can see it online. For anyone expecting the slickness and stardust they've been associated with, it's a surprise. The sound is shaky, the stagecraft unfocused. Christine sings songs from the albums they made with Bob Welch, Lindsey tackles Oh Well and Green Manalishi from the Peter Green years. It's curious but intriguing, the focal point keeps shifting with the musical styles, but that dude with the afro can sure play guitar, and check out the chick with the maracas flitting round the stage like a dragonfly… you can *feel* the audience being drawn in and won over. Within months this tentative unit will have intrigued its way to superstardom.

Forty years later, they elect to talk individually to MOJO – five stories that make up one. From blues roots and the Peter Green line-up's doomed majesty, via catastrophe, exile and rebirth in the melodic riches of *Rumours* and beyond, rifts healed but scars still livid. In order of recruitment: Mick, John, Christine, Stevie and Lindsey. Fleetwood Mac.

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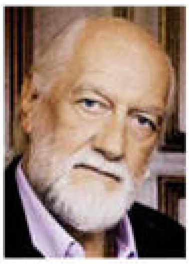
"We'd Look At The Carnage And Say, 'Shit, What Did We Do?'"

From the blues to booze and back, protected by a guardian angel named "Fred", the Mac's manic beanpole recalls roots, shoots, Peter Green and more.



MICK FLEETWOOD HAS THE KIND OF PHYSIQUE that requires one to be permanently *on*. When you're a doorway-filling 6ft 6ins, it's pretty hard to be shy and retiring, so he doesn't hang back. He steps, ducking, into the room, shakes hands vigorously and is off. Words tumble out of him pell-mell. His train of thought often derails itself, but minutes later will come back around to vividly make his point. His speaking voice is still slightly posh, his chat peppered with expletives and youthful constructions. On-stage, the deranged mantis with the dangly balls and huge wingspan, utterly at home behind his vast drum kit, becomes a convivial ringmaster for the circus troupe that bears his name. Off-stage, dressed today in a crisp white shirt and an embroidered turquoise satin waistcoat, with his long white hair and beard, he resembles an affable pirate captain: wise, well-travelled, twinkly. And yes, seeing as you asked, he is still haunted by the BRIT Awards of 1989. For this severe dyslexic, repeated autocue failure in front of his peers brought back awful memories of classroom humiliation. It was his worst possible nightmare. It's hard to think of anyone who deserved it less.

How did your lifetime relationship with the blues first begin?

Peter Bardens, organ player, playing me Nina Simone, Mose Allison, that sort of stuff. I came from The Shadows and Eden Kane, Everly Brothers, Buddy Holly, that's the stuff I'd learnt to play drums to. I got hooked in Notting Hill by Peter, introduced to the first hashish joint and Ladbroke Grove, West Indian culture and music. Then R&B was integrated into our relationship with Peter Green, who joined the band with me and Bardens – The Peter B's. We did all instrumentals, Willie Mitchell, Jimmy Smith. Funky shit. Then I joined John Mayall's Bluesbreakers for a short while. That was the real blues boot camp, doing Lowell Fulson, B.B. King and the shuffle, all that stuff.

Why was that generation so hooked on the blues, do you think?

It's not necessarily just the blues thing. That's obviously part of it, but for those who were slightly older than me – I was born after the war, 1947 – there was a big statement: "I don't know what I'm doing, but I know what I don't fucking want." They didn't want the same, business as usual, "Your country needs you" shit. That music, especially R&B, represented "I'm not working at the fucking steel mill." You didn't have to study or join the army, or to do what your dad and granddad did. Boom. I think it really appealed as a ticket out.

One of the first singles I ever cherished was Man Of The World. That really spoke to me.

Well, it's a sad song. Had we known what Peter was saying… What's that line? "How I wish that I'd never been born." You know, whoa. It's pregnant with passion, it's a prayer, it's a crying out.

That run of singles, Black Magic Woman to Green Manalishi, that Peter oversaw, may be the most intense, incredible run of 45s made by any band ever.

Yeah, I'll take that. Fucking-A.

It's one of the big rock'n'roll What-ifs. If there'd been Peter Green-led albums after *Then Play On*, which is incredible…

I think it would have been really profound. I have no doubt what was missed. I think we would have had a place sort of like Led Zeppelin in America. The creativity was on a par with where they took themselves. That's what I think would have happened. I think we would have had a really, really elastic musical trip. Experimenting with sounds and styles and orchestras.

It was clear from his songs that Peter was searching for something spiritually. If he hadn't had the collision with acid, do you think his trajectory would have gone away from the band anyway?

Well, that's the big pregnant question. To do what we're talking about here is incredibly vulnerable, sensitive stuff, that he delivered in a very powerful way, you would never think that the deliverer could not take the world. Maybe Peter was ill anyway. I've heard that the type of illness he got, his schizophrenia, might have happened anyhow. I don't believe that. Peter… he was so fine.

This was the age of old-school, showbiz management. Were you getting any kind of useful advice or was it all just, "Never mind son. Here's your itinerary, get in the van and see you later."

Oh yes. There wasn't any advice. And we didn't request any. It was all about work. There were care-taking Svengalis, Brian Epstein, the image-making. We never had that.

It was a thing with Peter and I to be independent, not to sell your soul to the company store. One of my parents signed the hire purchase agreement on the van, an old wreck, but it meant we were in control, no one in management or the label could take that from us. Clever.

One of the earliest pictures of me and Pete, just the two of us, before the band actually was formed, was at a jazz festival. I had my hippy hair, and my Nehru jacket on. There he is with the mutton chops, the Bluesbreaker, you know. The odd couple, totally. We were there bartering microphones off the support bands. Because he said, "We need our own shit, we don't fucking owe anyone favours."

What are your favourite records from the post-Peter, pre-Buckingham Nicks years?

I love *Bare Trees*. *Mystery To Me* is a great album. *Kiln House* immediately after Peter left is, in retrospect, charming but wholly adrift. Danny [Kirwan] and Jeremy [Spencer] weren't frontmen, they were petrified. We did all that lovely 'pot-smoking-Buddy Holly' shit. Basically a private recording session for Jeremy, to live out his rock'n'roll fantasies. That's truly adrift. But out of that, Christine joined and it started to build into a musical relationship that Chris and Bob Welch had. We decided to go to America and never came back. But we always used to sell. Not in Europe, we were done, but when we went to America we would sell 100,000-200,000 albums. It enabled us to play colleges, to work, to pay the bills.

There have been plenty of junctures in the Fleetwood Mac story where you could

➢

Sam Emerson/Polaris/Eyevine, Danny Clinch

"You'd better have a work ethic.": Mick Fleetwood, Los Angeles, January 1976. Portrait by Sam Emerson.

"It's a prayer, it's a crying out" Fleetwood Mac, 1970 (from left) Danny Kirwan, Jeremy Spencer, Fleetwood, soon-to-depart Peter Green, John McVie; (opposite page) Mick's roots (top) in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and (below) The Cheynes, with Peter Bardens (left).

"IT WAS A THING WITH PETER AND I TO BE INDEPENDENT, NOT TO SELL YOUR SOUL."

≺ have quite justifiably said, "Well, this band's fucked." But you never did. Are you the world's most extraordinary optimist?

Lindsey would call it, "You and your damned rose coloured glasses." To which I would say, "Actually, Linds, they haven't done too badly, have they? I'm keeping them on!" I'll take some of the kudos, no doubt. I'm happy that this is a happy ending.

Were any of the decisions that you made clouded by drink and drugs at the time?

None. I think it's my nature. I really don't think that part of me ever changed. Are you still doing something you love to do? Yes.

Well, John and I could quietly make a joke about it, look at the carnage or the intrigue and go, "Shit, what did we do?" Of course there was no such thing. John's my partner and he's a silent partner. He'll turn up if there's something to turn up to, but he doesn't weasel around like I did.

Do you mean he doesn't express an opinion about the decisions?

Oh no, that's not true. He just won't go and game-play.

Let's talk about Christine, because it's great to have her back again, isn't it?

This would be true.

How important was she in showing a way forward after Peter had gone? What was her musical contribution at that point?

Oh huge. Huge immediately.

The pop sense she brought was very prescient. She was four years in the future, wasn't she?

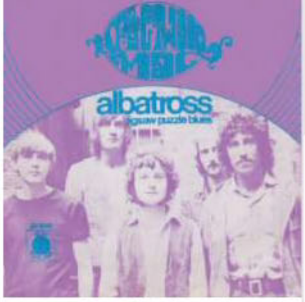
Yes, equally Peter had that ability in a heavier way. They were off to the races as songwriters. The blues, from whence they had come, was and is always part of the fabric of Christine. If she unloaded Oh Daddy on-stage, she might be singing back in a club with Freddie King. It's all there.

In your last interview for MOJO you said, "Now Christine's back, this band won't mutate again without her." So it's this line-up or nothing?

One hundred per cent. This is it, to me. Emotionally, if you think of the enormity of what has happened, the surprise of what has happened, the doors that have opened to be walked through… If you were writing a book, you'd go, "Isn't it a shame I can't end it like this?" We've had the chance to end it like that and I wouldn't dream of it any other way.

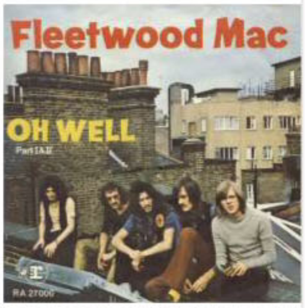
But here you are, one of only half a dozen acts, surely, who are still as popular, more so perhaps, than they were 50 years ago?

I do a meet and greet thing every show. Often lovely young people, totally knowledgeable about the band. I say to them it's like performance art now. It goes into a whole different realm. Look what's happening in the audience, all the stories – 30, 40, sometimes more years – in those seats. You didn't expect to be performing tonight, but you are. Yes, it's all the sadness and ups and downs and things that have happened to this funny band that you're looking at, but it's also your story and that, multiplied by 15, 20,000 people every night, is hugely powerful. I'm an observer on stage and I witness so much lovely stuff it's unbelievable. We're grateful. We're


Fleetwood Mac
albatross
jigsaw puzzle blues

Need your love so bad
Fleetwood Mac
Stop Messin' Round

fleetwood mac
black magic woman
stop messin' round


Fleetwood Mac
OH WELL
Part I & II
RA 27000

IMMEDIATE
Man Of The World
Fleetwood Mac
Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonite
Earl Vince & The Valiants

FLEETWOOD MAC
BLUE HORIZON
57-3145
ALBATROSS

reprise
ADVANCE
PROMOTION
COPY
45 RPM
RS.27007
FLEETWOOD MAC
THE GREEN MANALISHI (WITH THE TWO PRONG CROWN)

really fucking lucky. But also, we've worked hard. I remember way back at the start, setting up my drums, I was in some little band in Notting Hill Gate. We were all underage and playing in a pub. We had been asked to turn up! I walked in with my drum kit, and said, "Where do I set up?" In my mind I'm going, "There's a stage, this is a thing!" The landlord didn't even look up, "Oh over there." "Well, where's the stage?" "Over there, on the carpet." "Oh."

But once you get on the carpet, you'd better fucking do something. You learn that very quickly, whether you're asked to turn up for a ham sandwich and beer, two and six, or just the privilege of playing. You'd better have a work ethic.

This band's had a work ethic even in the craziest of times. I call him Fred. When I was a fucking nutcase, Fred would go, "Mick, you'd better go to sleep now," and I'd go, "What the fuck do I want to go and sleep for? I'm 20 grams in and I'm up for 10 days, I could give a shit." Fred would say, "Because you've got eight more shows to do and you're going to make a fool of yourself."

What you've learnt then, is, you can be the greatest player on earth, but if you don't fucking turn up and unload the equipment with the boys, if you blow the gig, you're not the guy for the band. It doesn't matter when you're in your living-room with your mates, listening to records and shaking a tambourine, but it matters as soon as the landlord says, "Get over on the carpet."

Bruno Ceriotti, Photoshot, John Slade

IMMEDIATE
RECORD
45 RPM
IM 080
MAN OF THE WORLD
FLEETWOOD MAC

MAC NUGGETS #1

The Blues Years ('67-70) panned for gold by **Mark Blake**.

1. MY HEART BEAT LIKE A HAMMER

From its opening burst of cockernee chit-chat there's something fabulously grimy and English about the first song on the first Mac album. Jeremy Spencer plays the ancient bluesman, while his bandmates build the chugging riff on which a career was founded.
On: *Fleetwood Mac* (1968)

2. LOOKING FOR SOMEBODY

At times it was as much about what Peter Green *didn't* play as what he played. Rarely more so than on this lean slow blues, where Mick Fleetwood's metronomic drums fill the big gaps between the bandleader's voice and wheezing harmonica.
On: *Fleetwood Mac* (1968)

3. NEED YOUR LOVE SO BAD

Fleetwood Mac's single version of this '50s blues staple followed B.B. King's 1967 arrangement. The lush strings do little to dilute the yearning power of Green's guitar or his voice. Allegedly an unconfident vocalist, there's no sign of reticence here.
On: *The Pious Bird Of Good Omen* (1969)

4. BLACK MAGIC WOMAN

Later a big hit for Santana, the Mac's original helped these former blues snobs crack the UK Top 30. Testament to Green's underrated pop skills, Mick Fleetwood described it like so: "Three minutes of sustain/reverb guitar with two exquisite solos."
On: *The Pious Bird Of Good Omen* (1969)

5. ALBATROSS

New kid Danny Kirwan couldn't have hoped for a better introduction than playing on this Number 1 hit. A blissed-out reverie that belied bubbling intra-band tension, it was a showcase for Kirwan and Green's intuitive guitar meld. Simply beautiful.
On: *The Pious Bird Of Good Omen* (1969)

6. MAN OF THE WORLD

The opening "Shall I tell you about my life" hints at Green's troubled mind. By the time he declares "I just wish that I'd never been born", you're left in no doubt. The loneliness of fame underlined by Green's reflective solo.
On: *Greatest Hits* (1971)

7. OH WELL (PARTS 1 & 2)

The spiralling riff is the bedrock of a song – split in half across the A- and B-side of the original 45 – that exudes jazz, classical and flamenco influences. Part fledgling heavy metal; part soundtrack to an unwritten spaghetti western; all brilliant.
On: *Greatest Hits* (1971)

8. COMING YOUR WAY

The third Mac album saw the band burst into glorious Technicolor. This Danny Kirwan-sung composition barrels along on a questing guitar riff with Fleetwood and John McVie swinging wildly behind. Also marvel at the heavy-grooving instro versh on the *Live In Boston* CD.
On: *Then Play On* (1969)

9. THE GREEN MANALISHI (WITH THE TWO PRONG CROWN)

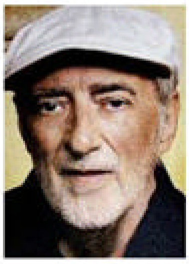
Sabre-rattling, proto-heavy rock and a Top 10 single in 1970. The 'green manalishi' was Green's dismissive nickname for money. At the time, the guitarist was urging his bandmates to give away theirs to help save the starving in Africa.
On: *Greatest Hits* (1971)

10. TELL ME ALL THE THINGS YOU DO

Recorded after Green's exit for the Jeremy Spencer-dominated fourth album, *Kiln House*. But this great cheery Kirwan track shone through, its brisk guitar groove embellished by uncredited new recruit Christine McVie's piano.
On: *Kiln House* (1970)

"It Was Instantaneous. A Great Union, Great Chemistry"

"Brilliant" Jeremy and Harold The Dildo to a brush with death and unlikely rapport with the ex-wife: a rare tête-à-tête with the "silent partner".



JOHN McVIE HASN'T GRANTED AN INTERVIEW IN 10 years. Any particular reason? "I'm no good at them. There's a brain to mouth disconnect. The others can talk, I don't have to." But he's being modest. He's a good talker. MOJO is invited to his daughter's house in Hollywood, where he stays while on tour in the US and where he recovered following his cancer treatment last year. His usual home is in Honolulu. It's 10am and he's sitting out front, smoking a cigarette and drinking coffee. That's about it for vices these days. Since his illness, he has sworn off alcohol. He hasn't consumed any other drugs for years. He is tanned and slim, though clearly a vintage-model rock star.

How did music first grab you?

The first turn-on was at my cousin's house in Hounslow. We walked in the door and he was playing [Buddy Holly's] Rave On. What the hell is that?! He kept on playing it and playing it, and I was hooked from that moment.

You grew up in Ealing. Was there any kind of "scene" there then?

There was only one club, really, the Ealing Jazz Club on Ealing Broadway, opposite the tube. Cyril Davies, Alexis Korner and Chris Barber had all played there. And the Stones, at one point. I think our group, The Krewsaders, played there once. God knows how or why – we were just a little instrumental band playing Shadows and Ventures stuff.

Who were you hanging out with? Any other musicians in the crowd?

I didn't hang out with a pro musician until we moved to West Ealing and lived opposite the bass player with Cyril Davies, Cliff Barton. I was 16, coming to the end of grammar school and there was nothing happening there so we used to skive off and go up to his place and listen to his blues albums and go, "What the fuck is this?!" That was the first intro to the blues, about 1961. Eventually, he was the one who got me into John Mayall. John asked him if he'd leave Cyril and join the Bluesbreakers and he said, "No, but there's this guy across the street, give him a chance."

The same day I joined John I started work at the tax office in Brentford. But I was useless at maths, and that's all it was. I guess some people got some really screwed up tax returns! They also sent me out front to answer these questions. There were a couple of breweries in the area and some of the customers used to come in pretty wasted, an irate drunken taxpayer meets this know-nothing kid… Someone jumped over the counter at me once.

What were your expectations when you joined Mayall?

It was just in the moment. "This is great!" There was no thought of the future. "Got some gigs!" "Wow, OK."

How did Peter Green get involved with the Bluesbreakers?

I think he came up to John after a gig and said, "I'm as good as him," meaning he could play as good as Eric [Clapton]. And he did.

Was that uncharacteristic bravado for Peter?

Oh, I think he was very sure of what he was doing, very focused. He basically took over Eric's spot. John was calling the shots musically, but he gave Peter the solos and he'd take off.

Peter started, and christened, Fleetwood Mac, but you weren't actually in at first.

When he left Mayall he asked me to join him and I said, "No, I'm quite happy where I am," but he kept bugging me for about four or five weeks and Mick too, "Come on you've got to join." After about six weeks we had a gig in Norwich and during a break I went across the street to meet them and said, "OK I'm in." 'Cos they were mates as well.

Anything else swaying your decision?

It was a good gig with John, but then he started bringing horns in. I thought it was getting too jazzy. Which it really wasn't. I just equated horns with jazz and I wanted it to be Chicago blues.

You were a bit of a purist at that point?

Yeah, stupidly so. Very blinkered. But I'm glad I was, or we wouldn't be sitting here now!

How quickly did you know that you'd made the right decision to join the Mac?

It was instantaneous. It was a great union, great chemistry, especially with Jeremy, he was fucking brilliant. Then Danny joined.

Strange chemistry in a way, though, with the comic element of Jeremy's contributions…

Jeremy brought a different energy to it. He did a lot of different stuff. Tiger by Fabian. Elvis, Viva Las Vegas, he even had the gold lamé suit. He had it down. He was a great mimic. I think people liked it. They liked it better than having the road manager come out with a silver platter with a huge rubber dildo on it, called Harold. Like we did at the Marquee. We never got busted for bringing on Harold, it's amazing. It was pretty obvious what it was.

Mick attached him to the kick drum, I understand.

Yeah, he used to have him wobbling around.

What was it like when Peter came in and said, "I've got this song," and it's Albatross or Oh Well? How would you react?

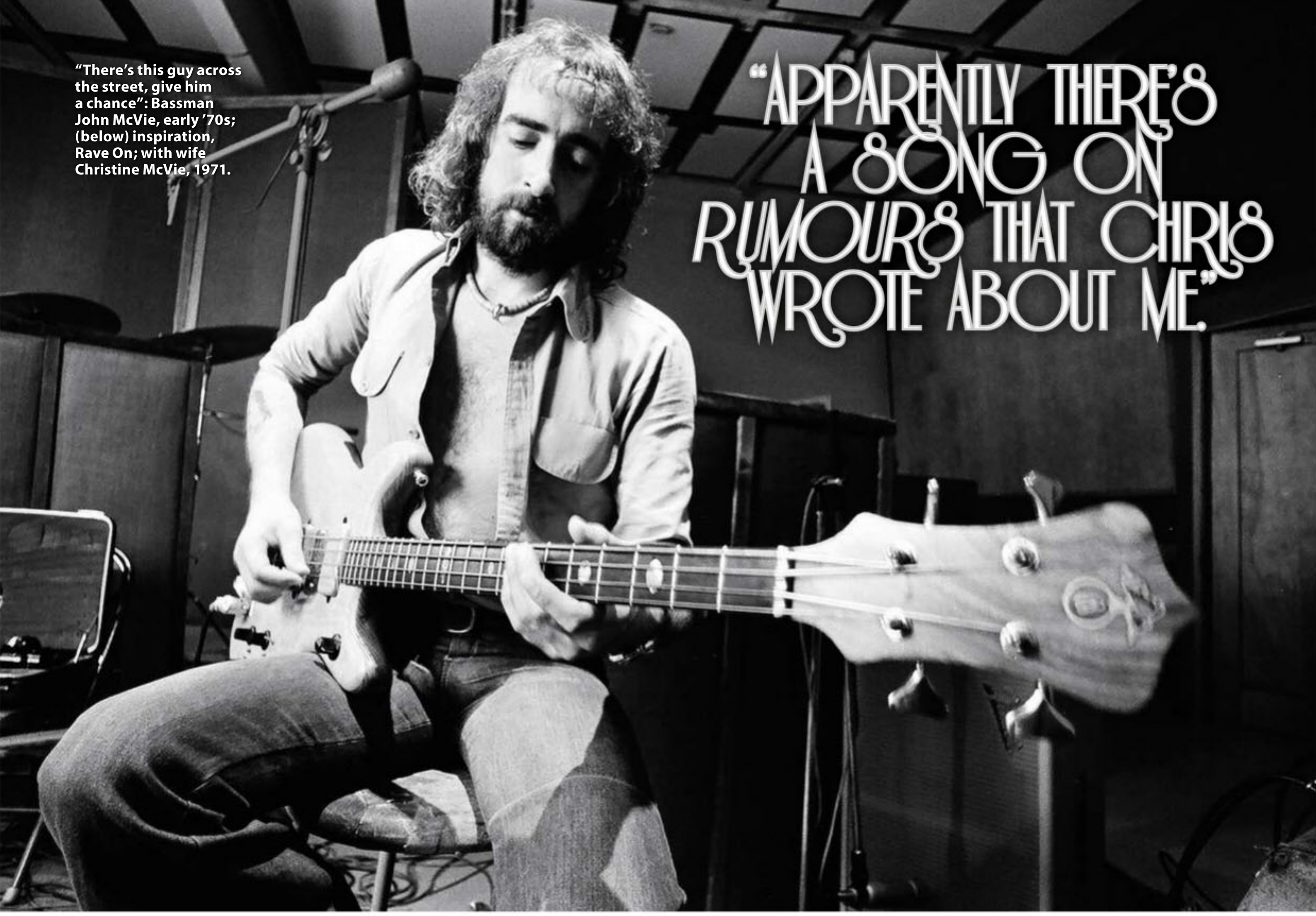
"What the fuck is this?" Usually. And then listen to it and listen to it. Jeremy and Peter had their own little Revoxes at home and could work up great demos. They'd bring those tapes in, so there wasn't that much interaction. "This is how it goes." OK, I'll play this.

Has any other band changed as spectacularly as the Mac?

Not that I know of! (*chuckles*)

Peter's departure was devastating but how was it when Jeremy and Danny dropped out, also in strange circumstances?

We'd got used to the traumas by then: "Oh shit, here we go again." Jeremy was the most traumatic because of the manner of his departure. [While on tour in the US, Spencer disappeared into religious cult The Children Of God.] It happened here in Hollywood. That was awful. We didn't know what had happened to him. Looking back, it was clear he'd become more and more interested in religion and biblical stuff. So we shouldn't have been surprised, but just the fact that he disappeared like that, anything could have happened to him. (*He makes throat slitting motion*)



"There's this guy across the street, give him a chance": Bassman John McVie, early '70s; (below) inspiration, Rave On; with wife Christine McVie, 1971.

"APPARENTLY THERE'S A SONG ON *RUMOURS* THAT CHRIS WROTE ABOUT ME."

Peter's spiritual search was the subject of a lot of his songs. Were they influencing each other?

I don't think so. They were on two different paths. Jeremy was more traditional and Peter was more esoteric, if you like: "What is the meaning?" and the inner self.

Other bands might have thrown in the towel. Why did you never give up?

It's what we did. It's a gig. Mick had a lot to do with it too. "No, we'll soldier on, keep it going." And he still is like that.

What was your influence in the making of those decisions?

Oh, I'm happy to go with the flow.

What was your feeling when he suggested Lindsey and Stevie?

Oh, it was magic. We met them socially and then did a first rehearsal just down the street from here on Beverly, in a basement. And when we heard Stevie, Lindsey and Chris singing a cappella, it was like, "Oh shit, this is great."

How has the relationship with Mick altered over the years, if at all?

Same, same. He's my best mate.

Do you see your role as a vital component that can't be removed?

No, not at all. It's just the rhythm section. I'm quite easily replaced.

After 50 years....

(*Laughs*) Well, yeah, I don't think it's gonna happen but it's harder to replace the front line. We won't do that again.

Fleetwood Mac has always had a particular kind of tension that other bands haven't had to endure.

You can say that again.

Was all the craziness good for the creative energy? Were the Mac like moths to a flame, you needed the drama to be creative?

It wasn't conscious. The main thing was to keep playing the music. It wasn't as if we were saying, "Let's have an argument and something edgy will come out of it." It was never like that, far from it.

What do you think left with Christine in 1998?

Obviously we couldn't do her songs and there was a void there, and more of a burden on Stevie and Lindsey for the writing. Now she and Lindsey have been doing new material. I wasn't there, I was just getting out of hospital. But it's good stuff.

Given all that was going on during its making, *Rumours* is a very upbeat, positive record.

Apparently there's a song on there that Chris wrote about me. I never put that together, I've been playing it for years and it wasn't until someone told me, "Chris wrote that about you." Oh *really*?

That was Don't Stop.

Yeah, I never twigged that at all. Should have been Go Your Own Way. Quickly!

How is it having Chris back in the Fleetwood Mac fold?

It's a breath of fresh air. It's fun. I get to talk to her on the plane. She's a funny lady.

How do you assess your life in the band? Do you feel lucky?

Absolutely. To the max. Luck has been such a big part of my life. Luck: one phone call from Cliff Barton to John Mayall. Lucky that I caught the cancer so quickly. I'm a lucky guy. (*He leans over and touches the wooden leg of a stool.*)

Has seeing off cancer changed your attitude to the career?

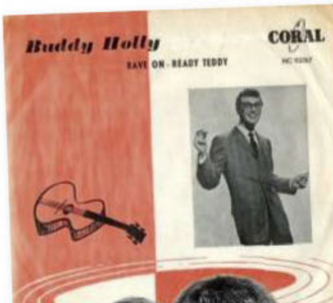
Very much so. I got my priorities rearranged, definitely. These two people come first (*he gestures to where his wife and daughter are, elsewhere in the house*), this is much more important to me now.

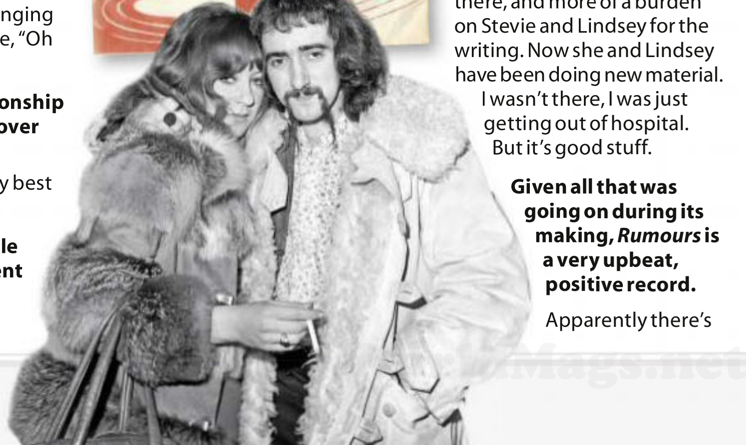
How much longer do you think Mac can go on for as a working band?

Not much longer, for me anyway. It's not the music – it's the peripherals, the travelling. Mick will go on until they put him up against the wall and shoot him.

I do flash on it, what must I fucking look like, this old fart up there. But I look out and there's kids, and kids on their shoulders now, and they all seem to be having a good time.

It's sort of worrying… Jesus Christ, will there still be a demand when I'm 75?!

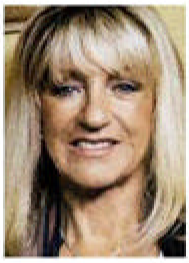




Danny Clinch, Starstock/Photoshot

"Originally, Peter Was The Guy I Fancied"

Jekyll & Hyde John, "disgusting" fame and gilded exile: the prodigal Songbird rejoins the flock… "Look, I'm getting goosebumps!"



CHRISTINE McVIE HAS SILVER HAIR AND GOLDEN skin. She radiates light. She looks happy. She's sitting in a room at a Santa Monica beachfront hotel, where the windows are full of the ocean. In moments of reverie, particularly when discussing her years away from the band, she apologises for gazing at the beach while answering questions. Her speaking voice is surprisingly similar to her singing voice, that long, flutey tone with an innate calmness to it. She is wearing dark, relaxed clothes with a few blingy accents, and a splint on her right hand, the result of a deplaning incident. She does little hand exercises while we speak, in readiness for the band's fifth LA Forum show tomorrow night. Last year, I saw her accept a lifetime achievement gong at the Ivor Novello Awards. The room full of peers went nuts, a sign that her music is held in great affection and that she occupies a unique place in British rock, the *grand dame*, representing her sex for longer and with more success than practically anyone else; yet she has always maintained a modest presence in the public eye, a quiet but vital ingredient in Fleetwood Mac since 1971. "Every meal needs a little bit of salt," she says.

What were your ambitions before music came along?

I went to art college and studied sculpture. And I ended up doing window dressing. My parents wanted me to be an art teacher, but I knew I couldn't handle a room full of kids.

What kind of sculpture were you doing?

I did little figures that sat on things, on shelves and corners. I'd do them in clay and cast them in bronze. Hey, I could do all the band members, get them cast. Merchandising! What a great idea!

What attracted you to the blues?

It was the emotion, the letting-go, a releasing of passions undisturbed for so long. When you heard all those guys back then, you were moved. It was raw, dark and dirty and sexy. I wasn't a very good blues player. But Chicken Shack's bass player, Andy Silvester, had a wall full of records and he lent me Freddie King's albums and said, "Listen to his piano player Sonny Thompson." I copied a few licks from him and went from there. That's how I developed my style.

What did Fleetwood Mac mean to you before you joined?

We used to open for them when I was in Chicken Shack. We did the pub and club circuit together. Originally, I was really attracted to Peter, he was the guy I fancied, and then I met John and that was it. John and those haunting eyes. We fell in love, got married and I was just a stay-at-home bride. I didn't have any aspirations to do anything else. Then they went to Germany and Peter had his brain turned upside down and left the band pretty soon afterwards. They were practising in Kiln House. Making that record that I drew the cover for, and I was just listening, hearing it going on, and Mick had one of his revelations: "Why don't you join Fleetwood Mac?" And within 10 days I was on stage in New Orleans.

There weren't many women in bands then. I was always the only girl. I didn't think about it, or the future. You just go for it.

You had a ringside seat for the departure of Peter – what was its effect upon the band?

It was cataclysmic. So sudden. Then he gave his money away, changed his name back to Peter Greenbaum, became almost a hermit. It was awful. When I think of *Then Play On*, Oh Well, Green Manalishi, those fantastic creations… Look, I'm getting goosebumps. Peter was obsessed with Vaughan Williams, very influenced by him, that's where Albatross stems from, I believe.

Tell me about making those albums after Peter left. You started to write.

We bought this big house in Hampshire called Benifolds. Mick, John and Jeremy and the families all lived in this strange house that used to be a vicarage. Downstairs were two huge empty rooms, one had a grand piano in it and I used to tinker with it and Mick would come down and say (*whispers*) "You ought to try and write songs, you should write." I was gently nudged in the back. I started to try, because Mick was so encouraging. He'd go, "Wow that's great! Let's record it!" And suddenly we had drums on this thing that I thought was useless and it was sounding really good. That spurred me on because I believed whatever I wrote, Mick would turn it into something.

Bob Welch kicked me off into another great direction on the *Mystery To Me* album. We began doing really close three-part harmonies and I started to understand commercial music. I loved Bob's music and his whole vibe. So sad about what happened to him. [Welch left in 1974 and committed suicide in 2012]

There have been so many disasters. Were you keeping your head while all about you were losing theirs?

No, I lost mine a few times. They would always call me the level-headed one, the Mother Earth, but I was crazy like them.

Was that required?

There's a loss of inhibition when you've had a 'couple of pints'. You go back home and go, "Argh, I'll write something." I'm not advocating this, but sometimes good stuff comes out of doing bad stuff. Sometimes a cup of tea doesn't quite cut it while you're writing a song.

You haven't collaborated much as writers in the band, have you?

We have on these last songs we've done. Lindsey and I have written six songs together and they're magical. We had a great time in the studio, him, Mick and myself. Very creative.

Why did you leave in 1998?

I'd been on the road for 30 years. I was tired of living out of a suitcase. I wanted my roots. My dad had just died, and I wanted to be close to my brother who lived in Canterbury. So I bought a house there and decided to move back to England. I'd also developed a fear of flying, So I sold my house in Beverly Hills, got on a big Jumbo, that was last flight I took for 16 years. I've always had an umbilical cord with Mick, and we stayed in touch. But, on reflection, I realise that when I cut something off, it's off. If I want to go, I don't look back. No flexibility.

For the first five years I was restoring my house, that took a long time, to make everything perfect, the gardens and the decorating. I enjoyed all that. And then I went into a spiral of isolation and decline, drank too much. I went to seek psychiatric help because of increasing depression, and never going anywhere except hanging around my 50-acre estate.

You didn't live with anyone?

Four gardeners and two housekeepers and I got a couple of dogs that I adore and was completely protective of. But I was trapped. So I went to see this guy, who's become a dear friend, and he said, "If you *could* get on a plane, where would you go?" I said I'd go to Maui to see Mick. So he said, "Book a ticket, first class, for six months' time and let's get you there." I called Mick and he was all excited and it turned out he was coming to

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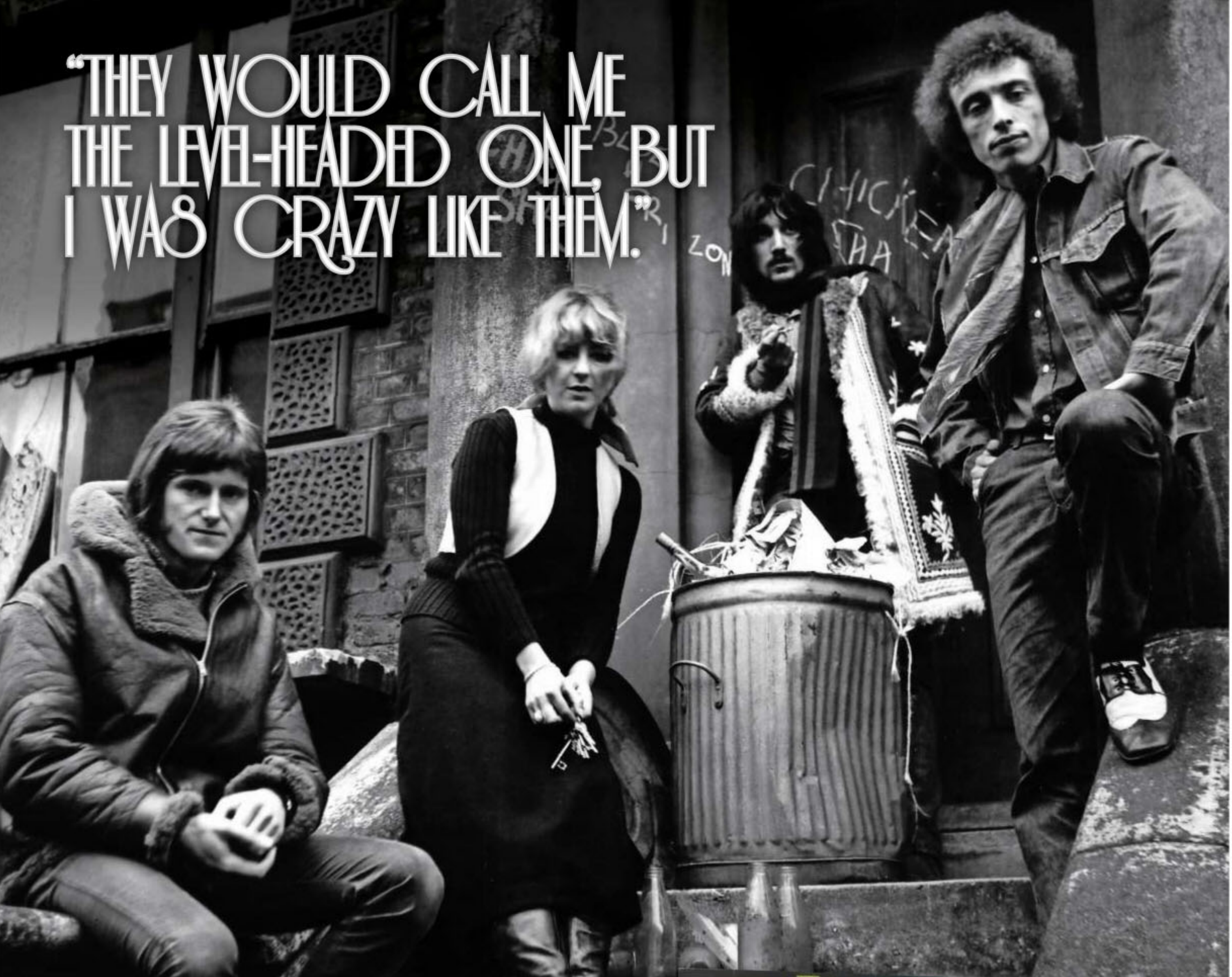
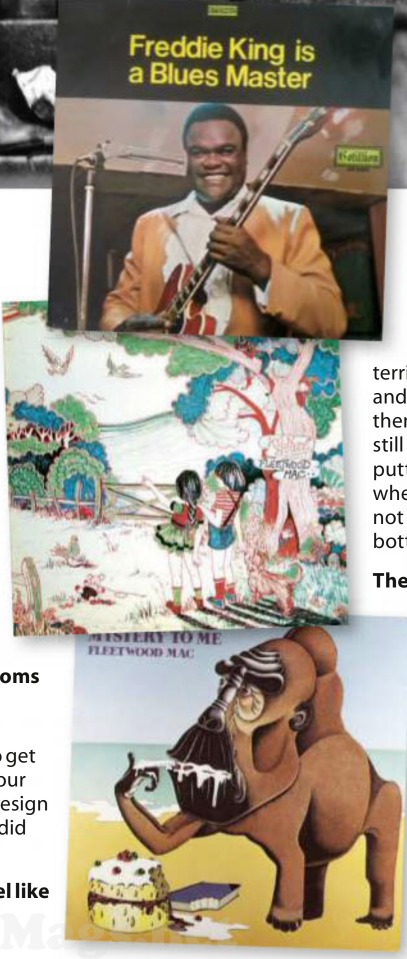
Alamy, Danny Clinch

"I was gently nudged in the back to write": Christine McVie, circa 1970.

"THEY WOULD CALL ME THE LEVEL-HEADED ONE, BUT I WAS CRAZY LIKE THEM."



Nobody here but us chickens: Christine with Stan Webb's Chicken Shack circa 1968 (from left) Andy Silvester, McVie, Dave Bidwell, Webb; (below) influential Freddie King album; (opposite, clockwise from top left) winning an Ivor Novello Award, 2014; flyer for Mick's Fleetwood's restaurant on Front Street, in Maui; Christine, carrying John; Bob Welch, "I loved his whole vibe."



< England to do promotion, so I ended up flying back to Maui with him, and I was fine. Completely at ease with flying. I played a few songs in this little blues band he has on Maui and that's when I started thinking, I like this, it feels good.

And you'd not missed it before then?

I never listened to a Fleetwood Mac record the whole 16 years. If something came on the radio I'd turn it off. Not that I didn't love the music, I just denied myself the pride of having done something that great. I felt I didn't deserve it or something. This is like talking to my psychiatrist!

But you've written these incredible, successful songs. You're very rare.

I got an Ivor Novello award last year!

I was there. You got a fantastic reception from the crowd.

Undeniably. That's partially why I feel, "You know what, I am good at what I do." It's all to do with insecurity.

But you had presidents using your work as a theme tune!

I know. All of a sudden, I didn't think I had what it took, so I had to retreat.

You also said the rock lifestyle had become wearisome.

Yes, I was looking at it all and I thought how disgusting and how decadent is this? I really want to get away from all this. For years I'd just go to the pub and have fish and chips, not to the fancy restaurants in a limousine. I'd lead anything but the rich life, even though I had this big house.

Talking of decadence, didn't you and Stevie used to get your hotel rooms redecorated before you checked in?

Not me, Stevie. We used to get grand pianos craned into our bedrooms. But I didn't redesign my colour scheme. Stevie did for a while.

Did *Rumours'* success feel like a vindication for all the hard work or was it disorientating?

It was *so* disorientating. With the loss of a marriage. Mick was going through terrible times with Jenny. Stevie and Lindsey were more abrasive then than they are now. That's still pretty abrasive. It's like putting a wet hand into a socket whenever they meet. They do not get on at all. That's the bottom line.

They'd still collaborate on music together.

(*Sharply*) No they don't! When?

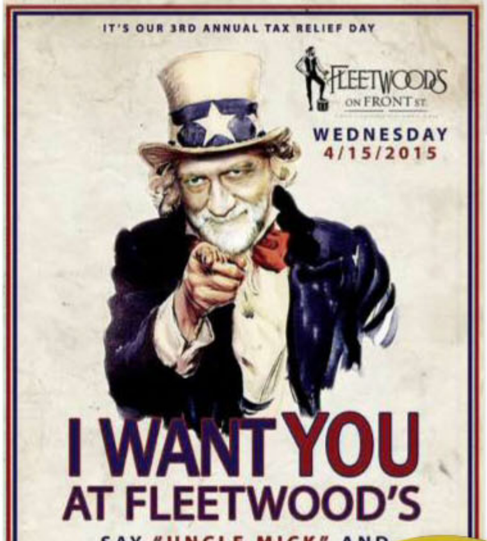
In that period.

Oh then, yes. But he would take her songs home and work on them.

John said to me this morning that he didn't realise Don't Stop was written for him.

Getty Images, PA, Photoshot, Corbis

WorldMags


IT'S OUR 3RD ANNUAL TAX RELIEF DAY
FLEETWOOD'S ON FRONT ST
WEDNESDAY 4/15/2015
I WANT YOU AT FLEETWOOD'S
SAY "UNCLE MICK" AND WE'LL PAY YOUR TAX
744 FRONT ST. LAHAINA, MAUI

REPRISE RECORDS
SANDS OF TIME
(Kirwan) (3:00)
RO.1057
FLEETWOOD MAC
Produced by FLEETWOOD MAC
A FLEETWOOD MAC PRODUCTION
P.1971

REPRISE RECORDS
FLEETWOOD MAC
A Fleetwood Mac Production
Engineered by Martin Birch
REP 1093
4:35
SENTIMENTAL LADY
(R. Welch)
©1972 Warner Bros. Records Inc.

I told him all along it was written about him, countless times, completely, totally, singly about him.

Was the fact he hadn't taken in that piece of information due to his drinking, do you think?

John's been through a battle most of his life with drinking. When he got colon cancer that was an awakening for him. He stopped drinking. He's such a stoic. He's both proud and humble, I don't know what the word is for that. He just goes, "Well, I've got this shit, I better go and fix it," and that's what he did. And amen, everybody wants to sit next to John on the plane, including me, so we can chat to him.

Why did your marriage fail, exactly?

Drink. He was raging drunk all the time. Jekyll & Hyde. He nearly stabbed me in the neck with a turkey knife once, in New York. I went down to Mick's flat to sleep on the couch. He was a nasty, evil drunk, unrecognisable, and he knows it. He won't mind me saying that, because he's just not like that any more.

Which of your songs means the most to you?

Songbird. Stevie and I were in a condominium block and the boys were all in the Sausalito Record Plant house raving with girls and booze and everything. I had a little transistorised electric piano next to my bed and I woke up one night at about 3.30am and started playing it, I had it all, words, melody, chords in about 30 minutes. It was like a gift from the angels, but I had no way to record it. I thought, I'm never gonna remember this. So I went back to bed, and couldn't sleep. I wrote the words down quickly.

Next day, I went into the studio shaking like a leaf 'cos I knew it was something special. I said, "Ken, [Caillat, *Rumours'* co-producer/engineer] put the 2-track on, I want to record this song!" I think they were all in there, smoking opium.

As you do, first thing in the morning!

Well, it was teatime! First thing in the afternoon. And they were all transfixed after a few bars. I could see them (*pulls jaw-dropped face*). And I was so relieved we got it on tape. It's an anthem to humanity. Sometimes I feel like singing it, sometimes I don't, but once you get in front of the audience and you see the people you wrote it for, that you want to sing it to, that gives you the energy.

How long can you keep doing this for?

As long as it takes! We're doing good.

MAC NUGGETS #2

The 'Bob Years' ('71-74), cherry-picked by **Mark Blake**.

1. WOMAN OF 1000 YEARS

Recorded while the Mac were living communally in a Hampshire mansion, smoking themselves silly. Danny Kirwan's lost-boy voice suited this saucer-eyed, post-psychedelic evocation of ancient womanhood who "may be seen up in the sky, and from the land… or floating by, a fisherman's day."
On: *Future Games, 1971*

2. FUTURE GAMES

American guitarist and singer-songwriter Bob Welch was the first to break Fleetwood Mac's Brit hegemony, and steer them away from 12-bar blues. This eight-minute song (included briefly in Cameron Crowe's Almost Famous) touches on jazz and even prog rock, with the new boy's fragile vocals shimmering in the mix.
On: *Future Games* (1971)

3. SANDS OF TIME

An almost-but-not-quite US hit from the band's commercially tough post-Peter Green years. Kirwan's lyric finds him communing with the elements, over a twin-guitar figure embellished by Fleetwood's percussive flourishes.
On: *Future Games* (1971)

4. THE GHOST

The essence of Welch-era Mac fuses blokey blues-rock guitar with a wonderfully melodic chorus. Still has cusp-of-the-'70s reefer madness ("Just a blue star hanging out in space / Earth Town is a lovely place"), but you can hear the blueprint of the band's future sound in its lazy grooves.
On: *Bare Trees* (1972)

5. DANNY'S CHANT

Composer Danny Kirwan's wah-wah guitar and a pounding Fleetwood drum figure drives this space-blues, a vehicle for its creator's wordless phonetic chanting. Think: a cross between Albatross and John Kongos' He's Gonna Step On You Again.
On: *Bare Trees* (1972)

6. SENTIMENTAL LADY

Bob Welch re-recorded this track to help start his solo career in 1977. A straight-ahead love song dedicated to Welch's then wife, its sun-kissed Hollywood chorus is augmented by Christine McVie's measured, very English backing vocal.
On: *Bare Trees* (1972)

7. HYPNOTIZED

Welch's fascination with UFOs, Native American mythology and unexplained phenomena helped fuel his songwriting. This spooked-sounding blues was inspired by a dream in which he saw a flying saucer land in the Mac's communal back garden.
On: *Mystery To Me* (1973)

8. EMERALD EYES

The opening track on Mac's modest hit LP *Mystery To Me* was a dreamy tribute to an ocularly gifted woman with "a heart that beats close to me." What makes it is Fleetwood/McVie's trampolining rhythm, booming and bouncing over the whole song.
On: *Mystery To Me* (1973)

9. WHY

Christine McVie said she never felt confident about her songwriting until Buckingham and Nicks joined. This string-adorned ballad suggests she'd nothing to worry about. See also Buckingham/Nicks-assisted live versions from '75 and '76 on YouTube.
On: *Mystery To Me* (1973)

10. BERMUDA TRIANGLE

On Welch's final Mac album, their soon-to-be ex-songwriter theorises about "hole down in the ocean… or a fog that won't let go" over Fleetwood's skin-tight drumming and sleepy guitar figures. Stoner West Coast pop par excellence.
On: *Heroes Are Hard To Find* (1974)

"I Didn't Leave Fleetwood Mac. My Brain Left *Me*"

Borne from her cave by the "mystical" Mac; later, "dwindled" by tranks… the Gold Dust Woman mulls her group's "romantic spell": "It will never stop."

STEVIE NICKS LIVES IN THE SKY. HER CONDOMINIUM overlooking Santa Monica beach appears to be cut into a cliff. Views of the ocean surround her. She calls it her "piece of heaven". Light must flood the place during the day, but it's 8pm when I arrive and the apartment's lighting is set to a crepuscular golden glow as if illuminated only by trapped fireflies. Stevie's sprightly, 17-year-old, Chinese crested yorkie provides a vocal welcome. Her assistant Karen introduces us. Stevie is small and trim, with smiling eyes, and dressed entirely in layers of black, as one would expect. Her long ash-blonde hair seems to envelop her when she sits down, and she looks at you through tinted glasses. Her speaking voice is husky and instantly recognisable.

When she sees I'm recording on my phone and iPad she launches into a lengthy diatribe about how she mistrusts all computers ever since former swain Joe Walsh took her to his computer-lined den, "all very boxy and 'Jetsony' looking", way back in 1983, and showed her the future of electronic music. Asking her to play a melody on a keyboard, he demonstrated how it could be orchestrated with the touch of a button. "I looked at him and said, So we've all just been replaced by whatever this is?"

What did Fleetwood Mac mean to you before you joined?

I was aware that there was an English band with a girl in it that was blues orientated. I don't know that I'd ever heard anything, so when we got the call on New Year's Eve 1974, I was straight to Tower Records with every penny Lindsey and I had, and bought every one of their records in there and listened to them all, then made Lindsey listen to as much as I could get him to.

My statement to him was, "You with your guitar playing can fit in very, very well." But I also saw that they had a mystical side. "I think that we can add to and enhance this band. Also, Lindsey, we are fucking broke. I am tired of being a waitress and a cleaning lady. It's not like you have to quit your job because you don't have a job. I have three, so I'm calling this one. We're joining Fleetwood Mac. Pack your bag. We'll do it for six months and if it doesn't work out, we'll quit." He was like, "OK, OK."

When you did the *Fleetwood Mac* album, had you played any gigs beforehand?

We went straight into recording.

So the rest of band didn't really know what you did on-stage.

No idea.

That must have been a revelation for them.

Well, the crazy thing is that the band that Lindsey and I were in in San Francisco, Fritz, was the Fleetwood Mac set-up, if you looked at it from the audience. I was here, there was a pianist here, there was a drummer and a lead guitar player. Lindsey was the bass player.

You knew how to work that format then.

Yes, we did. We'd opened for Jimi Hendrix, 75,000 people. We opened for Santana at the Monterey Carmel Pop Festival, right before Woodstock. We opened for Janis Joplin many times. We played the Fillmore, Winterland, the Avalon Ballroom.

So you weren't inexperienced.

No, we weren't. We did that for three solid years [1967-70]. We practised four days a week and played two days. That was all muscle memory when we went into Fleetwood Mac. When we walked on stage, the only thing they'd ever seen us do is be in a recording studio or very small rehearsal hall for that month and a half. They really had no idea who we were going to be on-stage.

To me it was like coming out of the cave, because Lindsey and I really had been in a cave for four years. This was just like coming out into the light. It was just brilliant, beautiful and really fun, not to mention for the first four weeks we got paid $200 apiece. Then for the second four weeks we got paid $800 a week, each. It was like we were fucking rich. It was amazing. Eight $100 bills and we just signed our initials!

When it took off, it happened really quickly, didn't it?

Really big and really fast, overwhelmingly so. It was shocking.

I was amused to read in Mick Fleetwood's recent memoir, about you asking for hotel rooms to be painted pink in advance of your arrival. Is that true?

Such a lie. No, the only thing that was over the top – first couple of years, when Lindsey and I were still going together and Chris and John were still together – each member of each couple had their own room, usually adjoining. Then, as of the *Rumours* tour, if there was a presidential suite the girls got it. Or two presidentials, we got them, me and Chris. That was the way of the world. For women, it's harder. You have makeup, hair, nails, all this shit you have to do.

I think the boys bitched about that, but in the long run it was like: Happy wife, happy life. Happy girls, happy world. Happy Chris and Stevie, life is easy. I just made that up!

Was achieving your dreams fulfilling or frightening?

It was pretty fantastic. Having Chris to share it with was great. We became good friends really fast, we were each other's confidante with everything that was going on with Lindsey and with John. Thank goodness we had each other.

How important was that tension in making Fleetwood Mac what it became?

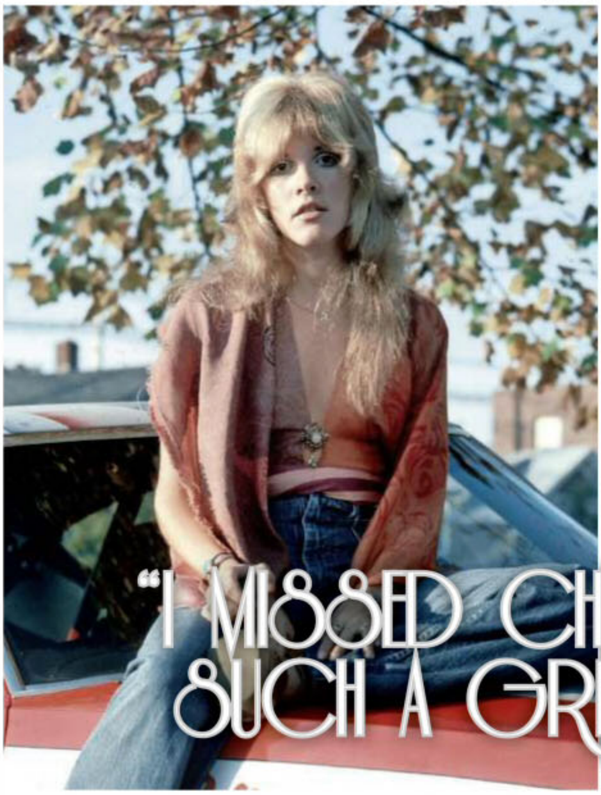
Well, I think every band should have a girl in it, because it's always going to make for cooler stuff going on than if it's just a bunch of guys. It's ultimately more romantic, no matter what. Even if nobody is going together, it still casts a romantic spell.

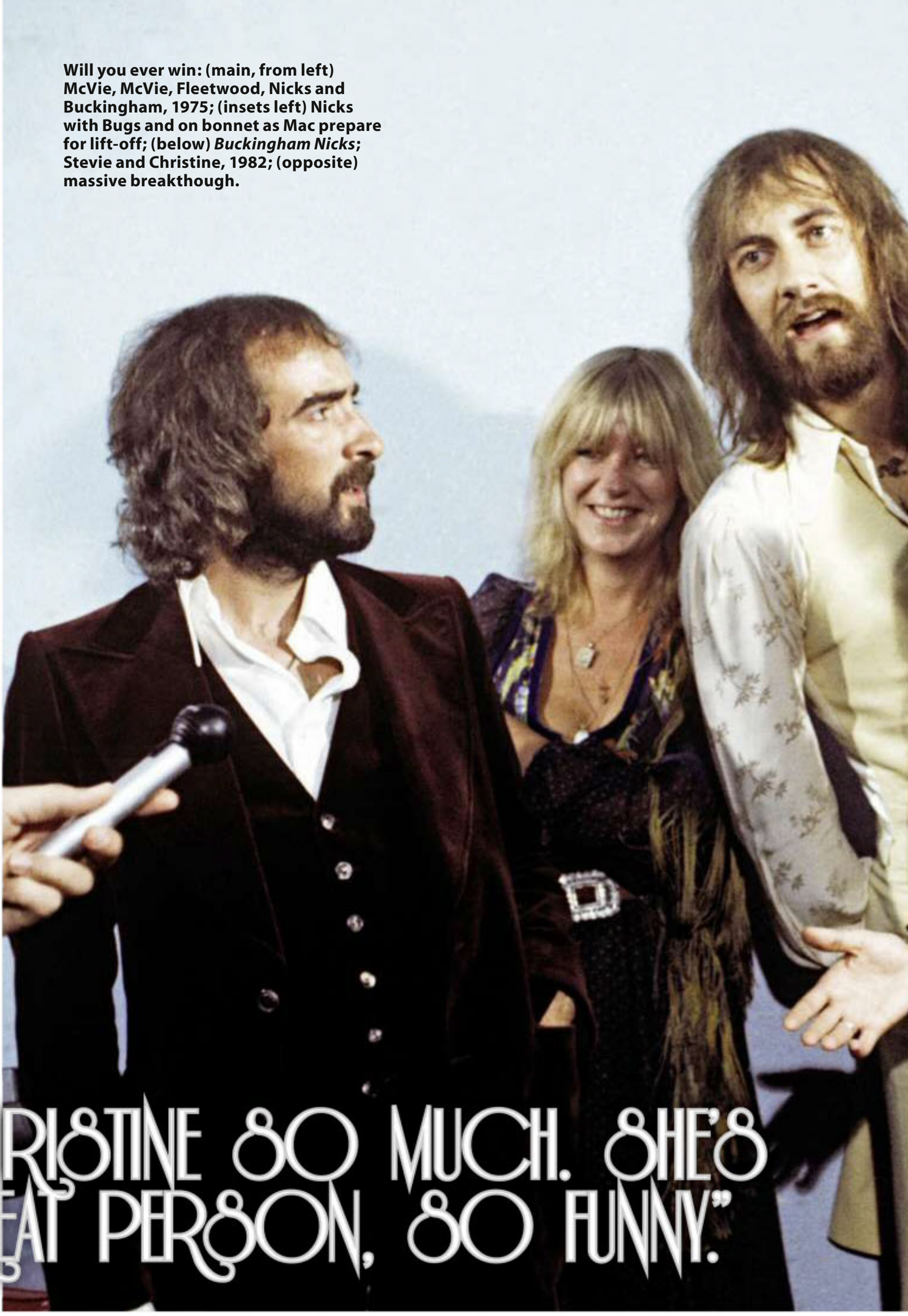
With Abba it was very important that they were two couples and their stories were coming through the songs. How true was that for Fleetwood Mac?

It was totally important and everybody is still writing about everybody else. It will never stop. Once you have that, even long after the couples are broken up, you still have that – when you sit down to write a couple of songs, that news from 100 years ago still creeps in. ➢

Sam Emerson/Polaris/Eyevine, Danny Clinch

“Well, I think every band should have a girl in it, it’s always going to make for cooler stuff.” Stevie Nicks, Los Angeles, 1978. Portrait by Sam Emerson.





Will you ever win: (main, from left) McVie, McVie, Fleetwood, Nicks and Buckingham, 1975; (insets left) Nicks with Bugs and on bonnet as Mac prepare for lift-off; (below) *Buckingham Nicks*; Stevie and Christine, 1982; (opposite) massive breakthough.

> "I MISSED CHRISTINE SO MUCH. SHE'S SUCH A GREAT PERSON, SO FUNNY."

Listening to *Rumours* again, I was struck by how effortless it sounds considering it was so hard won. It sounds really spontaneous and optimistic.

I think so. We were actually very grown up about what we took into the studio and what we left out in the lounge. I think that even if we had a bad night the night before, a bad argument where we were staying, or in the car, when we walked through the doors of the actual studio, we tried very hard to leave it outside. If we had an argument about something that was musical, it was always civil and we worked through it.

What did you make of Fleetwood Mac's struggles in the '90s, when you weren't involved in the band?

Really we can't blame that on problems with Fleetwood Mac or problems with me… The problem was I was taking Klonopin, that was like a horse tranquilliser. I just stayed in my house and ordered out from Jerry's Deli and watched TV and drew.

How did you begin taking it?

A month after I came out of Betty Ford [to get off cocaine], everybody was on me all the time, "What if you start doing coke again?" I'm like, "I'm not going to start doing coke again, so why don't you all back off?" Finally, one day, after the 50,000th call of somebody saying, "We're worried that you're going to slip," I said, "So what do you want me to do?" They said, "Well, what about you see a psychiatrist? Just talk to somebody about it." To myself I'm like, "None of you even went to rehab, but OK."

I went in to see this psychiatrist, who was the guy of the moment. He kept saying to me, "I think I have a drug that would be really good for you because you have trouble sleeping, you're nervous and it might [help make sure] that you don't return to coke. It's Klonopin." It was the darling of the drugs at that point. Finally I said, "OK, give it to me."

I think that this man is the one man in the entire world who I can honestly say I hate. He put me on this stupid pill that yes, indeed, calmed me down, but all my crazy Stevie Nicksness just dwindled and fell away. I just stopped doing everything. Klonopin was a disaster.

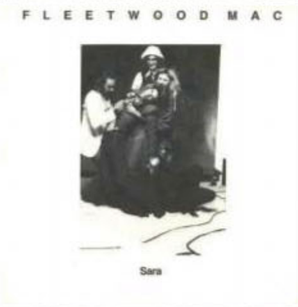
What were the benefits for you? Why did you keep on taking it?

There was no benefit, but you see it kicked in slowly. I just wasn't good for anyone. I just stayed home. Then finally I woke up on December

BUCKINGHAM
NICKS

Sam Emerson/Polaris/Eyevine, Getty Images, Rex

FLEETWOOD MAC
go your own way
silver springs



FLEETWOOD MAC
RUMOURS

12 of 1993 and said, "I'm really sick. I think I'm going to be dead in a week."

I called up my best friend Glenn and said, "You need to come and get me and take me to a hospital."

I went in for 47 days. It was hard. I almost died. I didn't leave Fleetwood Mac. My brain left me. I left everybody. And it was because of the Klonopin. The second that was out of my body I was back.

And now the classic five are back together. Chris seems delighted with it all.

She is. As she says on-stage, "Most people don't get to do something like this twice in their lives." She has been gone for 16 years. I missed her so much. She's such a great person, so funny, so much fun. She was here last night, I had to kick her out!

We have a bond that I probably only had with my friend Robin who died of leukaemia. She is that dear to me.

We're probably the oldest really great old band that's still out there doing almost a three-hour set. It's very physical and very strong. I think that we are a better band on-stage now than we were 25 years ago, I do.

Because?

Maybe just because we've been playing together for so long. We never really stopped playing together. Even in those breaks, in our heads, nobody ever felt like we had stopped. Nobody ever felt that Fleetwood Mac broke up.

KLONOPIN
KLONOPIN

REPRISE RECORDS
RPS 1345
3:46
FLEETWOOD MAC
RHIANNON (WILL YOU EVER WIN)

MAC NUGGETS #3

From *Fleetwood Mac* to *Tusk* (1975-1979), selected by **Mark Blake**.

1. RHIANNON

Based on Triad, novelist Mary Leader's 1973 tale of witchcraft and possession, Rhiannon helped Stevie Nicks stamp her personality on Mac. So much so that her wild on-stage interpretation of the titular sorceress was later compared by Mick Fleetwood to "an exorcism".

On: *Fleetwood Mac* (1975)

2. SAY YOU LOVE ME

Christine McVie's seesawing love song was the first 'White Album' single to crack the UK. Its "falling, falling, falling…" refrain as her soft lead vocal is counterpointed by Buckingham's flintier voice is the essence of '70s Mac distilled into a few seconds.

On: *Fleetwood Mac* (1975)

3. WORLD TURNING

A rare entry from the Mac's most unsung songwriting duo: Lindsey and Christine. The circling melody and lyric – "Everybody's trying to say I'm wrong… Maybe I'm wrong" – seems to reflect Buckingham's new whirlwind pace of life and, you suspect, his growing unease.

On: *Fleetwood Mac* (1975)

4. DREAMS

Stevie Nicks' gentle exploration of a broken romance was her riposte to Buckingham's harder-nosed Go Your Own Way. Composed on a Fender Rhodes in what had once been Sly Stone's clandestine drug boudoir at Sausalito's Record Plant Studios, it remains one of her signature songs.

On: *Rumours* (1977)

5. GO YOUR OWN WAY

The single that kicked off *Rumours*' global conquest is a surprisingly nonlinear pop song. Buckingham's mean lyric and guitar riff are direct enough, but what makes it is Fleetwood's offbeat, octopus-armed drumming. It's all over the shop – and in a good way.

On: *Rumours* (1977)

6. DON'T STOP

Essentially Christine's 'cheer up' message to a recently-dumped John McVie. "It'll be better than before, yesterday's gone…" she trills over an absurdly bouncy pop rhythm, provided, possibly through gritted teeth, by her bass-playing soon-to-be ex-husband.

On: *Rumours* (1977)

7. THE CHAIN

A Fleetwood Mac song about *being* Fleetwood Mac, with all its residual emotional traumas, the band's most self-referential song simmers with a similar musical tension. Over-exposure still hasn't dulled the excitement of hearing that thudding bass call-to-arms and Buckingham's manic closing solo.

On: *Rumours* (1977)

8. SARA

The greatest of all Nicks' great songs about womanhood was, she revealed in 2014, inspired by an abortion she had after getting pregnant by Eagle Don Henley. It's also the sort of haunted semi-ballad that now sounds like a trial run for her soon-to-commence solo career.

On: *Tusk* (1979)

9. BROWN EYES

A fine Christine McVie composition, hidden away on side three of *Tusk* and all but forgotten. The song's "sha-la-la" refrain cuts through a sparse, almost ambient blues backing like a light glimpsed at the end of a tunnel.

On: *Tusk* (1979)

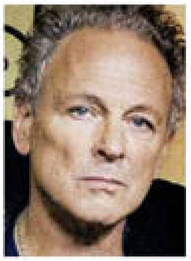
10. TUSK

The title track to Mac's commercial albatross single-handedly refutes any accusation that they were a solely middle-of-the-road musical venture. Its wonky fusion of tribal rhythms and honking brass is as off-piste and inspired now as in 1979.

On: *Tusk* (1979)

"We Lived In Denial. There Was No Closure"

On forgiving, forgetting and forging on – with caveats – by Fleetwood Mac's creative powerhouse: "We really were doing fine as a four-piece…"



LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM HAS A COLD. IN A FEW hours time he will be on stage. And he will stay there for a few hours. While the others take breaks during solos and acoustic slots, Lindsey is never off, either playing guitar at breakneck speed, charging around the stage or singing at full pelt. "I'm doing arguably age-inappropriate stuff," he says. "But I feel the same as I did 30 years ago." Indeed, he doesn't look anything like 65, on-stage or off. There is something of the man-machine in his fortitude and stamina, an intensity that's almost unsettling. In conversation, he is eloquent and measured, carefully considering his answers. You suspect some of the turns of phrase are well rehearsed, though perhaps that's unavoidable. For all his power on-stage and his skills on record – Mac's most successful work has always featured him as musical director – there is something unlikely about him as a rock star and he has seldom attracted the kind of spotlight or notoriety of others of his generation who were less accomplished. This is probably welcomed. One senses that he prefers to operate below the radar. "I've always been a fairly insular person – which has worked for me quite well," he says, laughing.

You were born in Palo Alto, famous now as the heart of Silicon Valley. What was it like then?

I was born in Palo Alto and raised in Atherton, an upper-middle-class town, where most of the wealthy Silicon Valley types live now. Back then it was lower-key, businessmen, a very Republican environment. Most of what existed down Highway 101 was strawberry fields and open space backing up to the bay. It was very quiet.

Your brother Greg was an Olympic swimmer and you were involved in sports for while. Was music a reaction against that kind of life?

It was never against anything. I was lucky to be part of such a functional family that spent so much time together. I had two older brothers, great parents. Of course I followed, to some degree, what was expected of me. I swam and played water polo in high school, as my brother had. I started playing guitar when I was very young, when my brother brought home Heartbreak Hotel: "Wow, that's a lot better than Patti Page." I was seven. I never took lessons, I had a chord book and was very song-oriented. My brother was buying all the great 45s of the time. I would sit in his room and learn these songs.

That was my inner life, but I never really felt it was at odds with my friends or family life and it was really only upon graduating from high school that I started to deprogram a little bit. I got in a band for the first time. Of course that was 1967, and we all started to grow our hair out. My brother thought I was mad.

I was talking to Stevie about your time in Fritz.

She exaggerates that a little. That was good experience on a certain level. I ended up playing bass, I didn't play lead 'cos I was a finger picker and we were playing this weird acid rock that got weirder as it went along. We had this guy Javier who did all the writing. Stevie and I were cogs in the machine. The experience we got wasn't so much about being creative, so much as a sense of a community, a little bit of stage craft, and being focused, 'cos we rehearsed a great deal.

This is the odd thing, I was never particularly goal oriented towards music. It was a fun thing to do. I never thought, "I just gotta make it." It just kind of happened almost in spite of myself. Stevie was way more ambitious than I was. Her dad was ambitious and willing to uproot his family over and over in order to keep moving up the corporate ladder. I think that affected her on some level – it taught her how to make a splash! I think she was looking for something that needed to be fixed a bit more than I was.

How much did you hesitate when you received the offer to join Fleetwood Mac?

There were several reasons why joining Fleetwood Mac wasn't a slam dunk. One was, as much as I'd been a fan of the Peter Green stuff and some of the stuff with Danny Kirwan, I was less aware of what went on later. The only clear idea I had about the band was that they hadn't had a leader for quite a while and that was something I thought I could do. Also, Stevie and I had done the *Buckingham Nicks* album and it had come and gone and we were experiencing a great deal of disinterest from our manager and yet, because we'd opened for some other bands and gotten some exposure, we were starting to get regional interest bubbling in places, Florida and Alabama, and getting radio play, so who knows, if we'd decided to see that through, I don't know what might have happened.

Fleetwood Mac has become a cool name to drop in the last decade.

Yes. We were a pariah for a while. We were the bad guys during new wave and the stuff that came after that. Though that was quite a while ago!

That provided an impulse when it came time to make *Tusk*, didn't it? What was driving you to make such a stylistic shift?

Many things. Some of it was where the music had gone. There were so many new artists then that fuelled that impulse, reinforced the idea to go outside what we had done. On a much deeper level for me there was this sense that *Rumours* became this thing where the success had detached from the music and become about the success, and that's a dangerous, Michael Jackson-land. You really have to look at what's going on if you arrive there. What happens with a lot of bands in that moment is you become a parody of yourself.

Tusk was a reaction to what was going on in our personal lives, and we wanted to free up the recording process and make it a little less efficient, if you will. There is this edict from the corporate world, "If it works, run it into the ground." But even if we'd followed the formulas we now can identify from the *Rumours* album, I doubt we'd have been able to recreate anything as authentic and beautiful as *Rumours*, because at that point it becomes very top down. If you're aspiring to be an artist you have to work from the bottom up. You have to make decisions based on what you think is interesting and important and going to move you forward as artists, even if it confounds the label or the listening public, which *Tusk* did.

Everyone seems really upbeat about this new phase and Christine's return. How about you?

It's interesting. We really were doing fine as a four-piece. When Mick called me and said, "I've been talking to Christine and I think she's…" You know, on paper it was great but you never know how these things are going to play out. I ➢

Peter Mazel/Sunshine/Retna, Danny Clinch

"Underneath all those other things, there's a lot of love.": Lindsey Buckingham, The Netherlands, circa 1976. Portrait by Peter Mazel.

MAC NUGGETS #4

Mirage and after (1982-), sifted for truffles by **Mark Blake**.

1. LOVE IN STORE

From Mac's multi-platinum, oft forgotten *Mirage*, this soaring, stellar Christine McVie pop song could have fallen off *Rumours*, and sounds like an attempt to woo back listeners disturbed by *Tusk*.

On: *Mirage* (1982)

2. GYPSY

FLEETWOOD MAC
GYPSY

A Stevie Nicks song yearning for her less complicated pre-Mac life: "back to the floor, that I love", when she and Buckingham slept on a mattress in their apartment. Perversely, the pair were barely speaking when they cut this.

On: *Mirage* (1982)

3. BIG LOVE

Mac's mid-'80s return meshed *Tusk*'s mad eclecticism with *Rumours*' peerless songcraft on this taut, nervy single, with its orgasmic "oohs" and "aahs", recorded by composer Lindsey alone and not, as suspected, with Stevie.

On: *Tango In The Night* (1987)

4. TANGO IN THE NIGHT

Buckingham donated many tracks meant for his next solo album to *Tango In The Night*, including this one, where cold, clinical '80s technology meets timeless lyrical angst. The closing guitar solo is like a welcome release – for Lindsey and the listener.

On: *Tango In The Night* (1987)

5. LITTLE LIES

FLEETWOOD MAC
Little Lies

The chorus's nursery-rhyme melody is a red herring. Like many great Mac moments, there's deep anguish beneath the surface. Another of Christine's love-gone-wrong songs, as she pleads to be kept in the dark rather than face up to harsh reality.

On: *Tango In The Night* (1987)

6. SEVEN WONDERS

Nicks missed most of *Tango…*, lost in a chemical haze and/or promoting her third solo LP. This rare appearance was *Tango…*'s second single, her ghostly gasp riding a sublime pop chorus to imbue the line "I'll never live to match the beauty again" with a hint of sadness.

On: *Tango In The Night* (1987)

7. EVERYWHERE

Its inclusion in a mobile network provider's TV ad means Everywhere will be forever identified with a moonwalking Shetland pony. The reality is a fine pop song with a lilting melody that confirms *Tango…* as a natural companion to *Rumours*.

On: *Tango In The Night* (1987)

8. SILVER SPRINGS (LIVE)

Intended for *Rumours*, but consigned to the B-side of Go Your Own Way, this charming, chorus-heavy Nicks ballad was revived for the classic line-up's reunion tour in the mid '90s.

On: *The Dance* (1997)

9. MURROW TURNING OVER IN HIS GRAVE

The Christine-less *Say You Will* is better than history remembers. Exhibit A: this broody Lindsey rocker about modern-day media overload, which aspires to Chain-like levels of intensity in its guitar fadeout.

On: *Say You Will* (2003)

10. SAY YOU WILL

The sort-of comeback LP's Nicks-composed title cut has an über-Mac nagging chorus and a refrain that burrows into the subconscious, drilled home by Buckingham's needling guitar and squeaky female backing vocals. They can do this sort of thing in their sleep.

On: *Say You Will* (2003)

---

called her up and said, "Chris, I think it's a great idea, but you do know that if you come back you can't leave again!" She was coming from this place that's all about how she's feeling about her life, and she realised how much she's missed this. That doesn't necessarily mean she was ready for 80 shows in the States, much less everything else we're doing, so we took it step by step.

One thing that was really key was that she had some rough ideas for new songs, and was very interested in me hearing them and taking them to a more recordable level. And I had a bunch of stuff that was just tracks with suggested melodies and we exchanged ideas and the synergy was immediate – and transcendent, in my opinion.

Judging by the demand, the public's excited too.

I think the return of Christine is timely. You have an audience that's made up of three generations, a great amount of young people who somehow, through the trickle down from parents, or through the circular nature of the culture, or the reappraisal of what we have done, have picked up on the body of work and to them it makes sense, and you see that reflected in certain younger artists out there too. It all hangs together as a circular moment for us. If you want to see it as the final act of a five act play or whatever, it just makes sense to everyone. So it's generated that much more interest.

Would Fleetwood Mac have worked without the tensions? Was the trauma important to the creative drive?

Very good question. I have to assume it was. It may not be tangible on a musical level but it was certainly tangible on people's interest in the records. It was well-known what we'd all been through, there was a subtext of heroism or something, that we'd pushed through and prevailed against odds that would have daunted someone else.

Are you all relishing making a new record?

I think Stevie's a little torn. It has a lot to do with her life in general and trying to figure out what means something to her. I don't know whether or not she'll come to the table for an album. I hope she does. I've said to her: "One of the things that was so beautiful for me about working on new songs with Chris was she wanted me to do that for her. That was something you used to want me to do for you – nobody's done it better than I have. It tapped into something in me, Stevie, with Chris, that I'd almost forgotten, when it's not just for yourself. If you would trust me to do that for you it would make me very happy." I think it scares her a little.

Talking to Chris and Stevie about their times out of the band, I wonder if these hiatuses are an inevitable reaction to the success and craziness, a period of rebounding…

What we had to do during the making of *Rumours* was live in denial. We had to take all these emotions and conceal them all and get on with what needed to be done. There was no closure. Speaking of Stevie and me specifically: Did I want to go in and do the right thing for her every day like I did, most of the time? No, but I did anyway. The only way I could do that was by living in denial, to compartmentalise my emotions. What you're referring to is the latent rising up of things that had been pushed way back in the psyche. The flipside of having gotten through that any way we could.

Why do you think you all managed to stay alive and come back together?

Underneath all those other things there's a lot of love. You also have to look at Mick, for years, before we even joined, it seems to have been his mission in life to keep this band together no matter what, whatever the cost, He wasn't always sure why he was doing it, but he is a magnet on that level.

He says there's a recognition between Mac and its audience of a strength and community.

It ties generations together. It ties personal lives together. It reinforces this sense of prevailing.

Long may it continue.

All right. I suppose I better go soundcheck.

Sam Emerson/Polaris/Eyevine

"IF YOU WANT TO SEE IT AS THE FINAL ACT OF A FIVE ACT PLAY, IT JUST MAKES SENSE"

"If you come back, you can't leave again!": Christine and Lindsey the first time around, 1979.

MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC. EDITED BY JENNY BULLEY

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>
> **ANNA WOOD ADMIRES THE ECCENTRONIC RESEARCH COUNCIL, ALBUMS P92**

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide. CD COMPACT DISC DL DOWNLOAD ST STREAMING LP VINYL MC CASSETTE DVD DIGITAL VIDEO DISC C IN CINEMAS BR BLU-RAY

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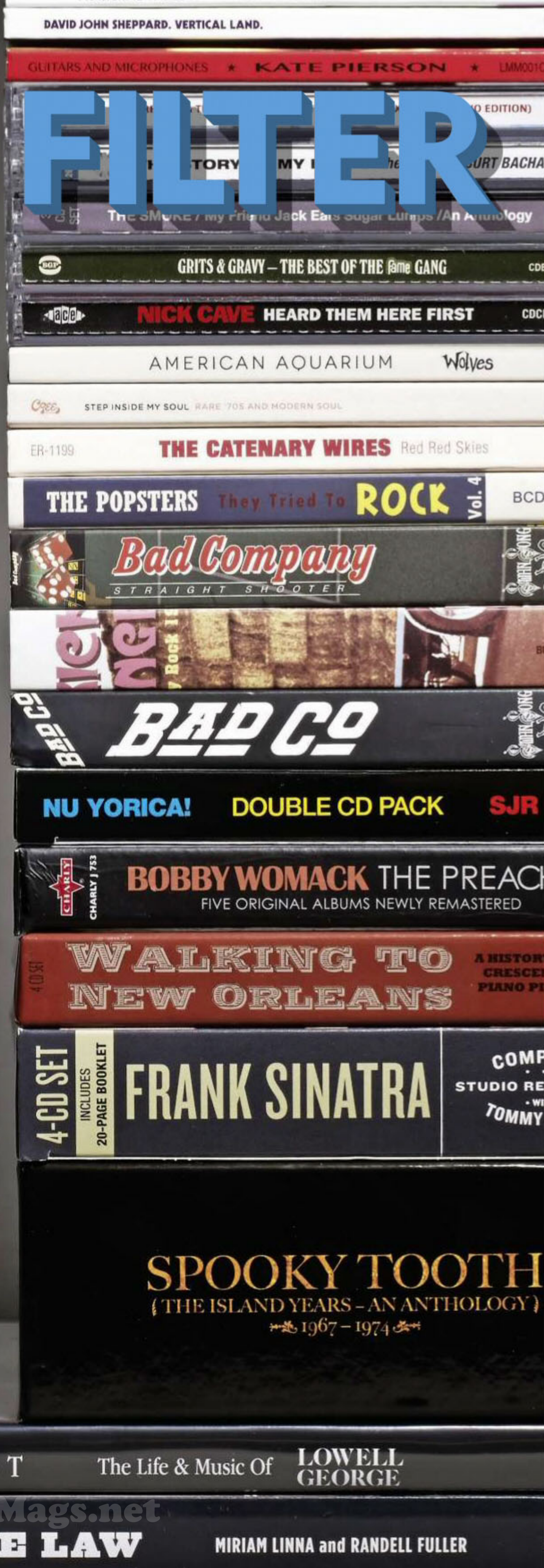
DAVID JOHN SHEPPARD. VERTICAL LAND.
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FEATS FIRST The Life & Music Of LOWELL GEORGE
I FOUGHT THE LAW MIRIAM LINNA and RANDELL FULLER

Burn down the disco

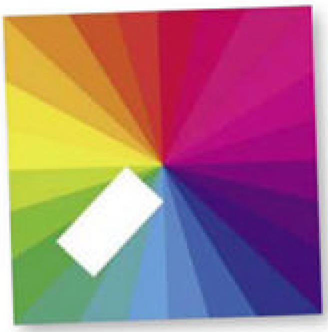
The brains behind The xx reshapes the history of dance music into a kaleidoscopic solo album. By Priya Elan. Illustration by Ian Wright.

Jamie xx

★★★★

In Colour

XL. CD/DL/LP



A highlight of The xx's early shows came when they encored with their remix of Florence + The Machine's You've Got The Love. Ditching the florid bombast of the original and retaining only a sample of the harp, the band reworked it with their trademark harmonies, a murky deep house beat and Ms Welch's voice pitch-shifted into unrecognisable shapes. It wasn't a remix at all; it was, rather subtly, an act of musical insurrection.

Through a quiet revolution, The xx provided the Top 40 with a new vocabulary, bridging the gap between the ambient, 2-step dance genre and gothic indie. Not only giving voice to anyone who ever felt the cold blankness of the nightclub but offering rock music a new idiom, it was a monochrome template taken up with varying degrees of success by Blood Orange, The Invisible, Jessie Ware and London Grammar. But no one could quite manage to replicate the band's unique alchemy.

Their success was due, in part, to their differences. With those Watt and Thorn harmonies, vocalist/guitarist Romy Madley Croft and vocalist/bassist Oliver Sim formulated their closeted longing (misread at the time as sexual tension) into lyrics about inescapable distance in the digital age. Madley Croft's guitar sounds (early Cure) and Sim's straddling, serious delivery (sharing a lineage with alpha rock males like Nick Cave) erred on the lo-fi side of alternative. Jamie xx, meanwhile, was the shadowy figure in the background. He was also the musical magic man: slackening the emo tendencies of the others with a keyboard texture that unfocused the lens, and a clattering beat that paused as much as it pulsed. You can hear it on their debut's opener Intro: the bodhrán-like sound sets the declamatory mood, while a more playful kick drum underscores a sense of roguish fun. Unexpectedly, the two sets of beats dominate the song.

Jamie xx returns to the abstract part of that equation on his solo debut. *In Colour* feels like an album only a DJ could make. It's the sound of someone spending a lifetime in a cave of shiny 12-inches and rave tapes. But it's also the handiwork of someone whose scant regard for musical boundaries and need to deconstruct gives them the freedom to fashion something new out of the past. Moving between those two competing camps, *In Colour* doffs its cap to dance music's incandescent past while destroying it with each BPM, creating something new.

Gosh is an apt starting point, with its jack-in-a-box rhythm straight out of *The Fat Of The Land* and the sampled hypeman patois you hear on pirate radio. "OH MY GOSH! EASY, EASY!" goes the almost hyperventilatingly excited voice. "Hold it down, hold it down. Hold. It. Down." The mood is infectious. It fizzes with that 'Friday night and I just got out of work' energy. It's a feeling of blitzkrieg euphoria that powers The Rest Is Noise too, with its glassy, paintbrush beats, ripe with the certainty that the power of the night will never be broken. Not even by the sunrise and the chirping of birds.

The three songs with his xx bandmates, meanwhile, might tread familiar sonic ground but feel untethered by the road-weariness that crept into 2012's *Coexist*. The claustrophobic Strangers In A Room, featuring Oliver Sim, is caught somewhere between the moods of xx songs like Fiction (from *Coexist*) and Fantasy (from their 2009 debut). Its main lyrical theme of identity (the anonymous and assumed kind) is underpinned by familiar purring guitar lines and a keyboard that sounds like a thousand tiny question marks popping up baldly into the sky.

On the other end of the emotional spectrum, SeeSaw with Romy Madley Croft is utterly delightful. With its funky drummer breakbeat, her sleepy/sad vocal about a fantasy love affair ("I see pictures in my mind/I see fingers up my spine") and kaleidoscopic production, it feels like a cousin of Grace's Not Over Yet.

Similarly, Loud Places pulsates with a nagging familiarity, like the cover of a '90s club track you can't quite place from a mixtape you've long since lost, the sample of Idris Muhammad's Could Heaven Ever Be Like This interweaving majestically. More retro goodness comes with I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times). It begins with an a cappella sample from The Persuasions' *Street Corner Symphony*, and with its grinding bass and collar-popping bell riff suggests the New Jack Swing era. Guest vocals from Young Thug and Popcaan respectively provide the X-rated lyrics and dancehall delivery.

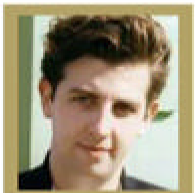
Despite these undoubted highlights, *In Colour* really comes into its own when Jamie xx gets abstract and confounding; where his ability to conjure up something wonderful from mosaic, non-linear paths is most evident. As on Sleep Sound, with its wistful melody that echoes *Los Angeles*-era Flying Lotus, the sample of The Four Freshman's vanilla harmonies coming in like a glint of sunlight into a darkroom. Or the one minute and 28 seconds of Just Saying, a distilled mood piece that plays as an emotional opposite to the album's more beatific songs. The track recalls the woozy aerated feeling you get after listening to Sonic Youth's Providence and Aphex Twin's *Drukqs*. Taking in a myriad of sounds (wolves howling, car alarms going off, a deep regretful sigh and a piano being played possibly as the world goes up in flames), it's a powerful reminder why the night can be so terrifying.

As its title and cover art suggests, *In Colour* presents the full spectrum of Jamie xx's talents, from subversive pop producer to ambient soundtrack conductor. Now he has shown how much he can do, it is going to be hard for him to go back to being just another lower-cased consonant in the band.

KEY TRACKS

- SeeSaw
- Just Saying
- I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times)

"THE MOOD IS INFECTIOUS. IT FIZZES WITH THAT 'FRIDAY NIGHT AND I JUST GOT OUT OF WORK' ENERGY."

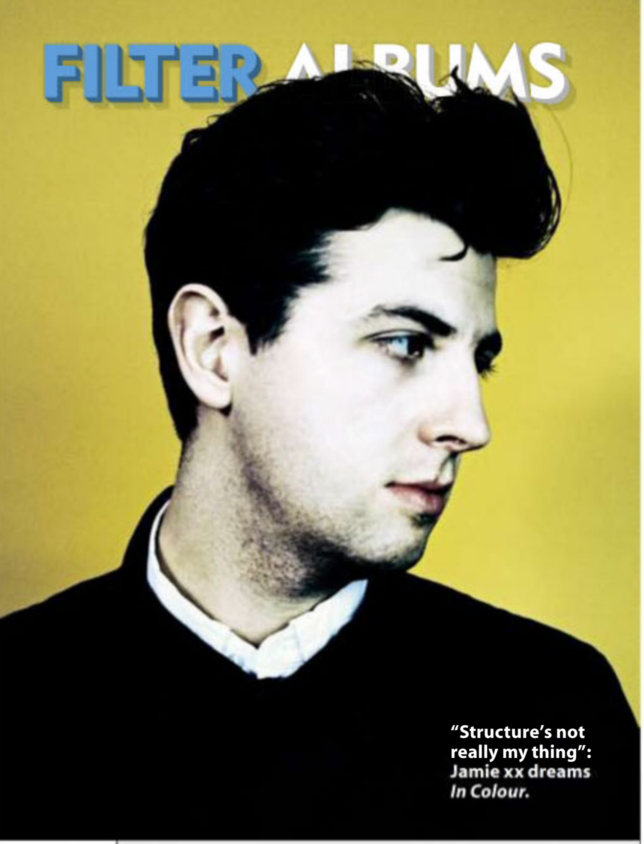


Laura Coulson

BACK STORY: FULL SPECTRUM

- The title and cover of *In Colour* are perhaps surprising. The xx were known as purveyors of a palette that was restricted to black, whites and maybe even some greys. For his first solo album, Jamie xx decided to change tack. "We've come a long way from being 17 years old and having our first press shots done, looking gloomy," he says. "My musical tastes have broadened and become very eclectic. It's a lot more colourful now." Still, he admits, he still enjoys wearing black.

JAMIE TALKS! THE xx DJ ON BREAKING THE RULES, RHYTHMS AND GOING IT ALONE…



"Structure's not really my thing": Jamie xx dreams *In Colour*.

"Dance music is a very backwards looking thing."

Jamie xx speaks to Priya Elan.

How was *In Colour* different to making the last xx albums?

"Aside from the tracks I worked on with Oliver and Romy, I didn't have anybody to bounce ideas off. That was the main difference. Even then those songs were started on my own. I'd send the songs to them and we would finish them together. I didn't feel the pressure of being on my own. At first I wasn't making an album really, I was just making music to make myself happy. I only decided to turn it into album at the end of 2014. Because I thought that in order to start work on the new xx album, I had to get this music out of my system. I had a lot of ideas and felt like I could carry on forever, but I think that would be detrimental to my mental health."

What were you influenced by?

"I've been influenced by music in London because that's where I grew up. There's so much of international music culture that's been imported here which seeped into what I was doing. Dance music itself is a very retrospective looking thing in a way. It constantly references itself in whatever comes next. I tried to make stuff that I felt sounded new to me. Like with I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times). That came about when I was staying in Brooklyn for a couple of months while we were performing a residency at the Park Avenue Armoury. I remember I would be driving over the bridge listening to Hot 97 and Young Thug would be on the radio every five minutes and there wasn't a more perfect setting for it."

How do you create tracks?

"In terms of structure… well, structure's not really my thing. Some of my songs have unexpected structures, I guess, which have become part of my sound. Out of all the songs, I think The Rest Is Noise was the most challenging, because it went through a lot of different versions. At one point it had Oliver on the track and that turned it into an xx song. I went through a period while I was making it where I felt like I wasn't focusing and having too much fun. That song was hard because it tells a story of how difficult it can be for me to make a song."

Has it influenced the next xx album?

"Doing this album has definitely changed how we work together. We're a lot more open to more dynamics in terms of what we can do. We have less rules now."

Joost Vanderbrug

JEFF BECK LIVE+

Jeff Beck

★★★★

Jeff Beck Live+

ATCO. CD/DL

Beck's 2014 co-headline jaunt with ZZ Top, plus two new studio tracks.

There are virtuosos and then there is Jeff Beck, a guy who can take a tune as familiar as Danny Boy and transform it into a zero gravity reverie beamed-in from cloud nine. Other inspired covers here include an (ultimately) apocalyptic-sounding A Day In The Life, a sweetly affectionate Little Wing, and an extraordinarily ballsy take on Bonnie Dobson's Morning Dew. Overall, Beck's playing is by turns exquisitely dainty and jaw-droppingly unhinged, and if there is another almost 71-year-old still channelling the kind of turbo-charged punk irreverence Beck brings to raucous new tune Tribal, your scribe would like to know. Despite its pedestrian title, *Jeff Beck Live+* proves that, these days, Geoffrey Arnold Beck is by far the most dangerous-sounding of The Yardbirds' celebrated guitar triumvirate – and also that he still packs more trickery than the entire Magic Circle.

James McNair

Bill Wyman

★★

Back To Basics

PROPER. CD/DL

The former Stones love machine cuts first solo record in 33 years.

Since he left the Stones in 1991, Billy Wyman hasn't stopped rolling, helming his Rhythm Kings through five studio albums while keeping tourists well-fed at his Sticky Fingers restaurant. Now, three decades after *Bill Wyman*, comes this unexpected and trenchantly singular statement; and very strange it is, too, not least for sounding uncannily like a missing-in-action 1980s Ian Dury & The Blockheads record. Over highly competent mid-paced funk, soul and blues – crafted by a session A-team including longtime collaborator Terry Taylor and Robbie McIntosh – Wyman intones lengthy gravelly raps of a metrical, automatic, "Use your intuition/You don't need no recognition" nature. By track three, jaunty brass and piano transform the already inescapably Cockney tailorings into something worryingly akin to the theme to TV series Minder; yet the autumnal, self-revelatory November, an ode to a post-fame life where days and months blur into one, makes it worthwhile.

Pat Gilbert

Ludovico Einaudi

★★★★

Taranta Project

PONDEROSA. CD/DL

Italian maestro of classical-lite turns up the volume with a Taranta dance blowout.

You may have Einaudi filed in your mental jukebox as concocter of gran-soothing Classic FM melodies. But this suite of swirling folk/world rhythms has caused fields full of Italians to dance themselves stupid. Einaudi takes his love of a hypnotic chord sequence and melds it to the high-velocity folk tunes of the Salento region of southern Italy, all flying fiddles, keening voices and giant tambourines. Tradition had it that the spinning Taranta dance cured the bite of the tarantula spider. More fuel is added to the fire by the bluesy guitar of Justin Adams, from Robert Plant's band, and the kora of Ballake Sissoko. African rappers, Asian drummers, bagpipes and massed cellos all pile in as Einaudi joins the dots between diverse folk traditions. The results are operatic, over the top and often rather wonderful.

John Bungey

Slaves

★★★★

Are You Satisfied?

VIRGIN EMI. CD/DL/LP

Noisy, punky debut from the Kentish duo.

SLAVES
ARE YOU SATISFIED?

Royal Tunbridge Wells might not sound like the cradle of pugnacious rebellion, but it's that contrary spirit that enlivens Slaves. Like many of the current crop of louder indie rock bands, duo Laurie Vincent and Isaac Holman opt for a minimal set-up – relying mainly on drums and guitars – but this is no po-faced search for purity. Instead, there's a playful quality to the chunky, adrenalin-soaked fuzz the duo create, a sardonic, Mike Skinner-ish humour peppers their shouty observations of political outrage and social inequity. Bolshie anthem Cheer Up London takes the work-life balance to fatal extremes; the chiming feedback of Sockets satirises glamour modelling from both sides of the lens, while the strung-out wisdom of Sugar Coated Bitter Truth actually suggests there might be something in their parody of paranoia. Slaves are angry at the world, but they have a wry smile at it too.

Paul Stokes

Slaves: aka Angry from Tunbridge Wells.

Leftfield

★★★★

Alternative Light Source

INFECTIOUS MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Pared-down UK dance music deities still pull it off.

If releasing your first record for 16 years is daunting, the stakes are raised considerably if – as in Leftfield's case – both your previous albums went platinum. What's more, Leftfield's sole-remaining member, Neil Barnes, is now doing it without former partner Paul Daley. Yet Barnes meets the challenge with some élan. *Alternative Light Source*, aided by a clutch of judicious guest appearances, balances crowd-pleasing festival epics, intense techy workouts and bubbling synth lullabies. Following his cameo on the recent Prodigy album, Sleaford Mods' Jason Williamson seems to be the go-to man for dance music grandees right now: his East Midlands street patter embellishes the low-end bass wobble that feeds the sink estate tech of skank Head And Shoulders, while Poliça's Channy Leaneagh adds breathy incantations to Bilocation's pulverising stomp. Despite the extended sabbatical, Leftfield's muscular, invigorating presence remains undimmed.

Stephen Worthy

The Vaccines

★★★★

English Graffiti

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

Arena indie-rockers pull off tricky synth/R&B makeover.

Third album in, these chart-storming Brits, hitherto in thrall to The Jesus And Mary Chain and Buddy Holly, have set out to achieve greater currency by drawing from a more contemporary sound palette, inspired chiefly by pop/R&B trailblazers like Pharrell Williams. Any such change seems unfeasible as opener Handsome rollicks off the blocks like *Automatic*-era JAMC at 78 rpm. But Dream Lover soon sucker-punches the listener: with its electro-glam riff (not too dissimilar to Arctic Monkeys' Do I Wanna Know?), wispy verses and infectious chorus, this feels every bit like The Vaccines' transformative hit-in-waiting. Later, Want You So Bad marries outlandishly-treated whammy-bar guitar to a brittly sexy bump'n'grind rhythm, while Minimal Affection and falsetto-refrained Denial tastily resemble Duran Duran via masterful ProTools manipulation. Justin Young's crew, alongside co-producers Dave Fridmann and Cole MGN, have finessed a forward-looking treat here.

Andrew Perry

Jim O'Rourke

★★★★

Simple Songs

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

Bravura return to song for Chicagoan avant-gardist and Sonic Youth alumnus.

Long exiled in Japan, Jim O'Rourke's previous solo album, 2009's *The Visitor*, was a mosaic-like instrumental set, and while he still dabbles in outré electronic composition, fans of the man's iron-wit-in-velvet-musical-glove song-craft (see 1999's *Eureka*) despaired of hearing him sing again. Not, as has previously been his habit, named after a Nicolas Roeg movie, this eight-song suite, five years in the making, is ironically titled: far from 'simple', these are songs of achingly delivered, baroque pop complexity, full of goose-bump-inducing hairpin turns – a potent marriage of Van Dyke Parks' *Song Cycle*, John Cale's *Paris 1919* and Big Star's *Third*. From the soaring, string-laden Friends With Benefits to the extended metaphor-adorned Townes Van Zandt-like These Hands, and Last Year's Southern boogie-meets-palm court string quartet alloy, this is rock as thrilling symphonic invention. They *do* make them like this anymore.

David Sheppard

Leon Bridges

★★★★

Coming Home

COLUMBIA. CD/DL

Captivating debut conjures up pop's bygone age.

He's only 25, but with his clean cut image and authentically retro approach to music-making this honey-voiced dancer/choreographer-turned singer from Texas comes across like a late-'50s/early-'60s throwback. While proto-soul man Sam Cooke is unequivocally a key influence in Bridges' seamless meld of gospel tropes with a pop aesthetic, he's no mere copycat or a peddler of vintage-style pastiche. Vocally, he has his own sound, and together with the production nous of White Denim's Austin Jenkins and Josh Block the young Texan has created a beguiling album whose melodic purity and harmonic simplicity conceals a sophisticated level of song craft. While some may view Bridges' music as decidedly old-fashioned, perhaps for others – this writer included – *Coming Home* has a timeless quality. It's also refreshingly innocent, functioning as an ideal summer soundtrack.

Charles Waring

Ash

★★★★

Kablammo!

ATOMIC HEART. CD/DL/LP

Britpop-era pop-punkers return, cranking out cartoon eruptions – and more!

Fans of this Downpatrick-raised trio's breakthrough hits (Kung Fu, etc) will be heartened by the comic-book ebullience of their seventh album title, and the fact that they're making records at all. *Kablammo!* is the first peep from them since 2009-10's *A-Z* series of fortnightly one-track releases on 7-inch single and download. A bold project, also in terms of its synthy direction, but that one never quite caught fire. So, following frontman Tim Wheeler's solo LP, *this* one is a return to quintessential Ash – plenty of excitable, buzzsaw pop (opener Cocoon, a re-emergence anthem; hilarious surf-guitar instro Evel Knievel), but equal measures of the longevity-clinching sophistication of 2001's *Free All Angels*. Indeed, Machinery's soaring melody is right up there with that album's Shining Light, while Free is a sublimely hushed ballad of horizon-wide opportunity after a relationship's end. The grown-up Ash remain every bit as irresistible as the pop-punk pups.

Andrew Perry

Rising above the chaos: Florence Welch.

Tom Beard

Rhapsody in blue

Burned out, then healed, then defiant, Florence is back stronger on third album. By Tom Doyle.

Florence + The Machine

★★★★

How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful

ISLAND. CD/DL/LP

THOSE WHO soar are faced with three choices: try to maintain altitude, set the controls for the heart of the sun or find a safe place to land. Having become that rarest of creatures, a high-flying and truly iconic pop star – with an almost Ziggyesque on-stage aura and a legion of young female look-alike devotees who swoon at her every move – after touring 2011's *Ceremonials*, Florence Welch fell to earth with an almighty bump, at least in emotional terms.

As reflected by her stark, black-and-white, intensely-staring portrait on the cover of this third album, *How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful* is more lyrically direct and honest, even if sonically the lure of The Big Music remains strong for Welch. Maddeningly catchy opener Ship To Wreck, with its Pretenders-ish guitar shapes, may return to her watery metaphors of old, but here they're employed to imagine herself as a grand construct faced with the threat of being dashed against the rocks.

Elsewhere she rages with anger, not least at the destructive relationship depicted in What Kind Of Man, painting herself into a scene where she's "trying to cross a canyon with a broken limb". Welch has said she suffered "a bit of a nervous breakdown" during the writing of this record and her time out of the spotlight, and more than once she wonders aloud if she's burned out her fuse. Amid the balladeering Hendrix guitar figures of Long & Lost she's marooned from what she once knew ("I figured out where I belong/But it's too late to come home"), while in the quietly stirring St Jude, named after the patron hallow of the hopeless, she wallows in the words, "Maybe I've always been more comfortable in chaos".

Musically, some of the colours have changed, even if the ambitious designs remain familiar: orchestral arrangements by Goldfrapp's Will Gregory favour brass over strings, the thumping drums of Delilah are less tribal and more Motown. Throughout, That Voice is notably more restrained, before being unleashed for dramatic effect. Only at one point does Welch sound like she's returning to a stylistic holding pattern, in Third Eye's heavy tom-toms and ecstatic chanting as she, a touch ironically, declares: "I'm the same/I'm trying to change".

Just when you're waiting for something entirely new, the murky Southern soul groove of closer Mother hoves into view. Exploding into a gospel chorus with something of an early '70s Stonesy swagger, here she is healed and defiant: "Make me a bird of prey, so I can rise above it". After a troubled time on terra firma, Florence Welch is clearly ready to soar once again.

Duelling banjos: the music of Shirley Collins (pictured with Alasdair Roberts) and Karen Dalton – as covered by Sharon Van Etten (top) and Josphine Foster, who appears on both albums.

Dual power

A pair of tribute albums celebrate two of folk's most distinctive yet under-sung artists. By Pete Paphides.

Various

★★★★

Shirley Inspired

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

★★★★

Unheard Songs By Karen Dalton

TOMPKINS SQUARE. CD/DL/LP

Remembering Mountains
Unheard Songs by Karen Dalton

THOUGH THEY never met, the stories of Karen Dalton and Shirley Collins – both celebrated this month with these coinciding covers albums – intersected in a variety of ways. In the early '60s, both found themselves co-opted into the hipper end of folk revivals, which they had predated by a few years. Taken in 1961, an early picture of Dalton sees her alongside a younger Bob Dylan at Cafe Wha? While Dylan was still searching for an identity, Dalton's was fully formed: a hillbilly Billie Holiday straining for transcendence with a 27-fret banjo and a feel for rhythm and phrasing that beggared belief. Given Dalton's bluesy predilections, it's tempting to think she may have even bought *Sounds Of The South* – an Atlantic Records compilation released a few months earlier which showcased performances by hitherto unknown blues singers in the Deep South. The album was comprised of recordings made by Hastings-raised Collins and her exiled American mentor/paramour Alan Lomax when the two embarked on a song-collecting expedition in the Southern states.

But while Dalton voyaged deeper into her version of the blues, Collins – also a deft practitioner of the banjo – took ownership of her own traditions and put her voice to some of the most lastingly influential English folk albums of all time, most notably 1964's *Folk Roots, New Routes* with Davy Graham. Given that she never wrote a single song, Collins might seem a surprising subject for a tribute album. Yet somehow it all makes sense. Now 79, she might baulk at the notion that her name has acquired 'brand values', but a look at the artists on *Shirley Inspired* – to pick three at random: Will Oldham, Angel Olsen, Graham Coxon – indicates the esteem in which an emerging vanguard of left-field performers hold her work.

And even if you're not setting out to deduce what her brand amounts to, repeated exposure to *Shirley Inspired* makes it clear. The digitised, disembodied treatment afforded to Cambridgeshire May Carol by Belbury Poly is a world away from the theatrical bluster of self-appointed folk custodians such as Ewan MacColl who gave Collins such a hard time for her understated delivery. There's something, too, of Collins' statuesque style in The Owl Service & Laura Cannell's spectral, modal treatment of Edi Beo Thu, Hevene Quene and a hair-raising chamber-folk reading of Locks And Bolts from Meg Baird. Eschewing accompaniment, there's a winningly offhand insouciance to the way Northampton singer Sophie Williams tackles what appears to be a Jacobite courtship song called Charlie. Given his geographical kinship with Collins, it's perhaps no surprise that Johnny Flynn's version of Rambleaway gleams with quietly careworn authority.

Of the 30-plus artists who contribute to *Shirley Inspired*, only Josephine Foster also makes it onto *Unheard Songs* – a set of co-compositions in which female (mostly) American songwriters remould some of Dalton's posthumously discovered words into songs. As anyone who remembers Thea Gilmore's 2011 attempt to pull off a similar trick with Sandy Denny's unrecorded lyrics will attest, the risk of hubris is great. And yet the results here are extraordinary. Tara Jane O'Neil's contribution, a wired, tormented rumination called At Last The Night Has Ended, is representative of a common empathy that binds this project together. Sung by Sharon Van Etten, Remembering Mountains is an apparent paean to the Oklahoma scenery that Dalton swapped for Greenwich Village and is every bit as breathtaking as one might hope from a Van Etten/Dalton co-write.

Equally deserving of superlatives are outsider-folk emissary Diane Cluck, who presides exquisitely over the insistent harmonic refrains of This Is Our Love, and Lucinda Williams dispensing the heavy-hearted reminiscences of Met An Old Friend. Scarcely less sublime is the pensive psych-folk spell spun by Marissa Nadler on So Long And Far Away. There's nothing to suggest that Dalton ever intended these words to be heard – but still, there's a universality to the sentiments voiced here which makes you wonder why she refrained from following in the footsteps of her pals Fred Neil and Tim Hardin by recording her own songs.

Had she done so, though, is it any more likely that her story would have played out differently? Twenty-two years have now elapsed since Dalton died homeless in New York. Around the same time, Shirley Collins could be found working in a Brighton DHSS, all but adrift from the folk world on which she had exerted such a lasting influence. But like the songs which both singers used to build their canons, your story is never over. *Shirley Inspired* and *Unheard Songs* both bear rich testament to the fact that posterity is barely getting started on these two.

FFS

★★★

FFS

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Accessible, engaging, but one-sided collaboration of Sparks and Franz Ferdinand.

Collaborations between established acts are a risk; for every Byrne and Eno there's been a Lou and Metallica. Franz Ferdinand undoubtedly have impeccable taste in picking Sparks as bedfellows. Even so, the Sparks sound is so Marmite-like in its appeal, and so powerful sonically, that the album will shock any Franz fans previously unaware of the Maels. On over half the songs, the marriage works; the parping synth beat of Call Girl, the sad Little Guy From The Suburbs, the slinky So Desu Ne (the nearest English translation from the Japanese is 'Yeah? Uh huh?) and the call-and-response *tour de force* of The Power Couple. But the titles and the lyrical obsessions are generally those of the Sparks *oeuvre*, and hardly any singer in music history could match the force of nature that is Russell Mael

David Buckley

Goatsnake

★★★

Black Age Blues

SOUTHERN LORD. CD/DL/LP

Doom metal heavyweights make triumphant return with first album in 15 years.

Recording only sporadically since their original inception in 1996, it's taken Goatsnake a decade and a half to finally deliver the follow-up to their last full-length, *Flower Of Disease*. Not that the group's extended absence seems to have done them any harm. Indeed, after a brief acoustic guitar intro from Slint's David Pajo, opener Another River To Cross quickly settles into a bulldozer fusion of hard rock classicism, blues-brewed heaviness and thick Sabbath-nodding riffs that holds sway right through to the closing chords of A Killing Blues. *Black Age Blues* is as satisfyingly solid and reassuringly familiar a comeback as you'd expect from an outfit boasting members of Sunn O))), The Obsessed and Scream. Here's one instance where good things really do come to those who wait.

Andrew Carden

Trembling Bells

★★★★

The Sovereign Self

TIN ANGEL. CD/DL/LP

Greek tragedy-inspired sixth album from chiming Glasgow psych-folkers.

Last seen touring with Mike Heron, and three years after their *Marble Downs* meeting with Will Oldham, Trembling Bells are not short of eccentric musical credentials, and *The Sovereign Self*, named after a line from a Dennis Potter drama and inspired by the plays of Sophocles, no less, is a dependably recherché affair on which the influence of Heron's Incredible String Band, along with Pentangle and The Doors, is palpable. Emblazoned with Lavinia Blackwell's soaring, gothic, school of Nico-via-Siouxsie vocals, prog-tinged opener 'Tween The Womb And The Tomb is an assured, all guns blazing tone-setter, full of spiralling, vaguely Eastern guitars and hallucinogenic imagery ("I saw a ship sail over the Yorkshire moors"). Much of the remainder follows suit, its tricky time signatures, Robby Krieger-indebted guitar wig-outs and sepulchral organ solos all part of the plangent retro charm.

David Sheppard

Sea Of Bees

★★★★

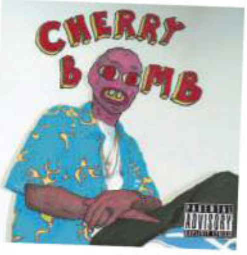
Build A Boat To The Sun

3LOOP. CD/DL/LP

Sacramento indie-popper's third time lucky.

Julie Baenziger, Julie Ann Bee, Jules – whoever she's decided to be this time, the multi-instrumentalist with a troubled past seems, as the title implies, to have jettisoned her sadness and stepped into the light. The upshot is a little gem, as previous disparate elements all swoop sharply into focus. Opener Test Yourself is a summery, giddy breeze; Karma Kard is cooler, insidious, with snarly electric guitar and Baenziger close-miked, faux-innocent and sounding like no one so much as actress Joan Cusack, complete with winning speech impediment. Don't Follow Me is gorgeous. Against a strummed, sweetly hokey melody, Baenziger sings with the dreamy, husky vulnerability almost of Mary Margaret O'Hara: "Your life is in your own hands… Don't wait too long for it to begin." A few tracks lose their way, but closer Monk, intimate country with wistful mariachi brass, is a soulful joy.

Glyn Brown



Tyler, The Creator

★★★

Cherry Bomb

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

Odd Future man's fourth solo joint blows hot and cold.

Though traces of early Odd Future's home-brewed nihilism still permeate, *Cherry Bomb* is very much its own beast – a flawed, frustrating and occasionally brilliant beast that provokes and impresses, even if it doesn't entirely satisfy. It's a vehicle with two violently contrasting gears, veering between distorted hip hop *à la* Death Grips or Kanye's *Yeezus* and lushly perverse soul-jazz pitched between the velvety squelch of Stevie Wonder's Superwoman and the most brilliantly oleaginous slow jams. Find Your Wings and Pilot are dreamy highlights, while on Blow My Load the guest vocals of Boyz II Men's Wanya Morris are somewhat spoilt by porno-inspired grossness. Indeed, listen too close to the lyrics and you'll often detect a dispiritingly autopilot misanthropy, not to mention pointless spewing of the word "faggot". Lose yourself in the music, though, and *Cherry Bomb* reveals a fevered charm.

Stevie Chick

SOAK

★★★★

Before We Forgot How To Dream

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP

Sensational and way-beyond-her-years debut from Derry teenager.

A 16-year-old debutante on Northern Ireland's Late Late Show, gripping her acoustic guitar with steely concentration under a severe haircut, Bridie Monds-Watson now makes the most auspicious of debuts. SOAK is an attempt to bypass her unwieldy name for something conjoining soul and folk, which is hardly where her album belongs; yes, she has clearly imbibed her parents' Joni Mitchell records, suggesting a Laura Marling in the making, but there's enhanced pop acumen and elemental shivers too, so maybe make that the new Lykke Li. Either way, B A noBody has the most knee-buckling chorus, SOAK's own backing vocals like ghosts at the nexus of a teenage crisis. Hailstones Don't Hurt and Oh Brother are equal peaks, swimming in acoustic reverb but pin-sharp observations. Maturity aside, Monds-Watson is still new to navigating adult realities, a stage in life where, as the album title suggests, we begin to dismiss the possibilities of youth.

Martin Aston

Willie Nelson & Merle Haggard

★★★

Django And Jimmie

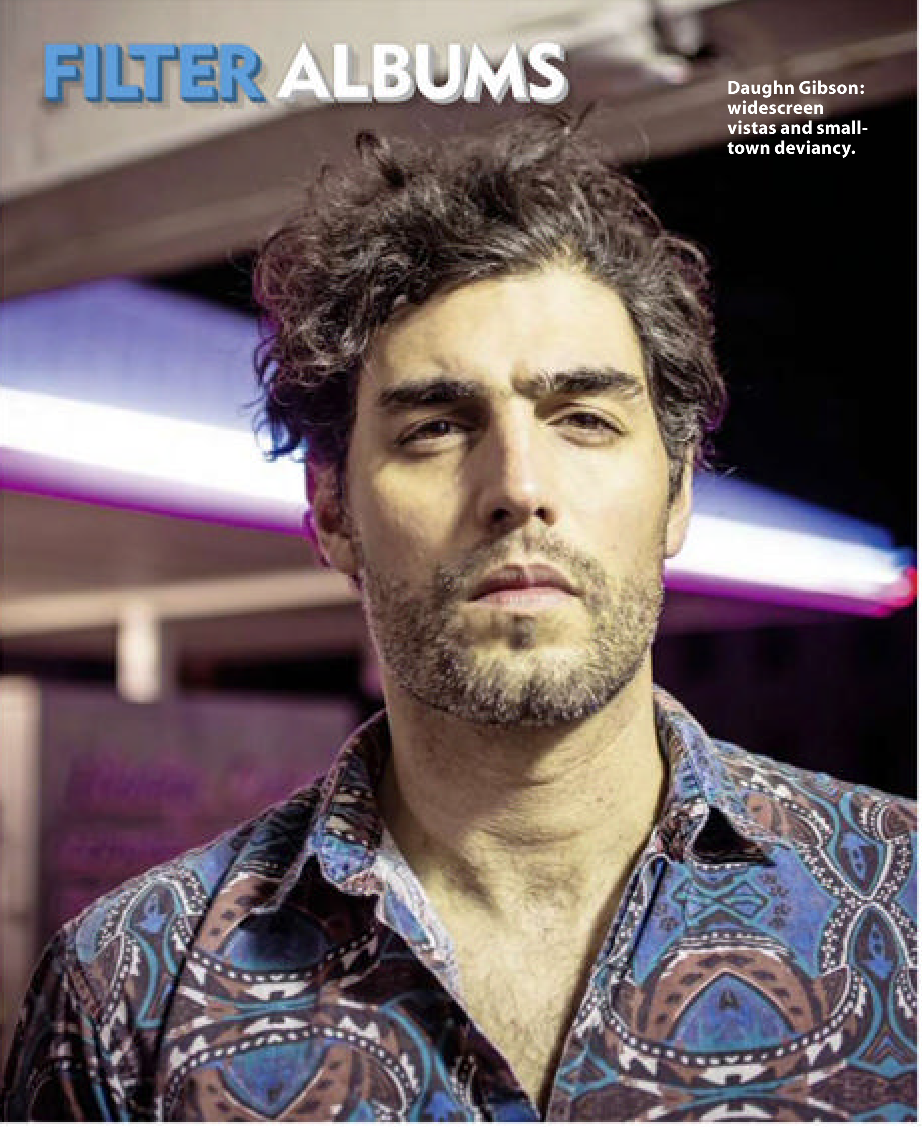
SONY LEGACY. CD/DL

Paying their respects to Reinhardt and Rodgers in fine style.

Hell bent, it seems, on releasing two albums for each of his 81 years, Willie Nelson's latest returns to the collaboration that made 1983's *Pancho & Lefty* one of his greatest. Get past the geriatric sniggering of It's All Going To Pot (did you know Willie likes a doobie? No? You do now), here's a beautiful album of covers and new material. Of the latter, the heartbreaking ballad Unfair Weather Friend finds Nelson singing like a man half his age, and It's Only Money (a Willie co-write with long-time buddy Buddy Cannon) kicks up some roadhouse heels, while Dylan's Don't Think Twice, It's All Right is transported to '70s Nashville. If Haggard's five writing contributions seem slightly lightweight in comparison, well, they would in such company, wouldn't they?

Andy Fyfe

It's all Greek to them: Trembling Bells get a Theban theme.



Daughn Gibson: widescreen vistas and small-town deviancy.

Wes Peterson

The Weather Station
★★★★

Loyalty

PARADISE OF BACHELORS. CD/DL/LP

Emotionally charged third album from Toronto folk singer Tamara Lindeman.

Tamara Lindeman built up a strong résumé as an actor before turning to music to cope with personal loss. Having established herself as a purveyor of malleable finger-picked acoustics and cautious verse on 2008's *The Line*, the Toronto songwriter added a little more flesh to the bones of elliptical break-up sequel *All Of It Was*, cushioned by a perennially soft smoky voice redolent of the young Joni Mitchell. Recorded in a crumbling French mansion, *Loyalty* retains the humble immediacy of its predecessors. And while the gentle basslines, lap-steel guitars and minimal percussion of collaborators Afie Jurvanen and Robbie Lackritz sympathetically adorn old country lament Like Sisters and the Smog-like guitar figure of Personal Eclipse, it's Lindeman's enviable ability to make the personal universal that shines through.

Andy Cowan

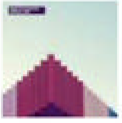
THE WEATHER STATION

David John Sheppard
★★★★

Vertical Land

VILLAGE GREEN. CD/DL/LP

Eno biographer and multi-talented instrumentalist goes it alone on latest.



Best known for his work with State River Widening and Ellis Island Sound, David Sheppard's first solo venture proper is an immersive journey into rhythmic motion and vibrant, transportive texture. Inspired by his travels through mountainous regions of South Africa, Norway, the Greek islands and Wales, particularly the sense of insignificance those landscapes can instil, Sheppard forms evocative soundscapes out of multiple layers of minimalist repetition. Using treated guitar and piano, marimbas, glockenspiels and dulcimer to create forward-moving, percussive foundations, deftly fabricated pieces such as Thumbnail Sketch Of Infinity, Seconds Minutes Hours and Mountain Time all take their cues from the similarly mesmeric chimes of Steve Reich and Philip Glass. Elsewhere, more spacious acoustic currents entwine to create softer, calming reveries every bit as difficult to resist.

Andrew Carden

BETH
HART
BETTER THAN HOME

Beth Hart
★★★

Better Than Home

PROVOGUE. CD/DL/LP

Reflective and unflinching, this is Hart's most mature work yet.

Beth Hart's style is a composite of classic soul music, as in the punchy Might As Well Smile or The Mood That I'm In, and nakedly confessional songs like Tell Her You Belong To Me or St. Teresa, where her melisma-laden voice bewitches the listener with its rich, subtle depictions of remembrance, acceptance and regret. But this highly accomplished album also finds her writing and singing in other registers: in Trouble she struts the blues-diva sassiness she's previously displayed on collaborative albums with Joe Bonamassa, though the biting guitar here is by Larry Campbell, while the yearning aspirational message of Tell 'Em To Hold On takes on a gospel resonance, and in As Long As I Have A Song she and pianist Rob Mathes capture a weary late-night ambience reminiscent of Sinatra's barfly musing in One For My Baby.

Tony Russell

Daughn Gibson
★★★★

Carnation

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

Pennsylvanian country gothic newly expatiated.

Across two preceding albums, Gibson's sound and vision – creepy tales told on a late-night drive with dimmed headlights – felt contained by the arrangements. *Carnation* adds burnished widescreen vistas, courtesy of co-producer Randall Dunn, whose left-field CV (Earth, Sunn O)))) is at odds with the lushness of these 11 songs. For Every Bite and I Let Him Deal expose Gibson's inner Chris Isaak, Shatter You Through ratchets like Don Henley's Boys Of Summer, and when the tempo slows Gibson's baritone mirrors the latter's '70s country schlock – in a good way. But as often, the music fits the slow seep of small-town deviancy that is Gibson's fascination; mental health meets sexual intimacy (Daddy I Cut My Hair), a drunk "jester of circumstance" (It Wants Everything), the nightmare of Runaway And The Pyro. The 6ft 5in, broad-shouldered Gibson finally sounds the part.

Martin Aston

Of Monsters And Men
★★

Beneath The Skin

UNIVERSAL/ISLAND. CD/DL/LP

Icelandic sextet partly recorded their second album in Los Angeles.

It's hard to remember what originally constituted the modern music meme: 'Arcade Fire-like'. Possibly 'goose-bump inducing'. Well now it feels like something more in line with 'horribly familiar'. Drums that pound like the climax of Braveheart? Guitarists who strum their instruments like each chord will result in pure gold emanating from their fingertips? Co-vocalists who chip in during *every* chorus, less 'Greek chorus', more 'that annoying neighbour who breaks out the score of Cats at the drop of a hat'? Unfortunately, Of Monsters And Men tick all those boxes here. Steamrolling over the comparative subtleties of their debut *My Head Is An Animal*, they've recruited co-producer Rich Costey (Muse) to pummel every song into abject submission. *Beneath The Skin* becomes a cautionary tale of how going for "affecting" can end up just terribly overwrought.

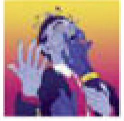
Priya Elan

Everything Everything
★★★

Get To Heaven

RCA. CD/DL/LP

Manchester quartet team up with Stuart Price for politicised third album.



"So you think there's no meaning to anything we do," sings Jonathan Higgs in the opening lines of To The Blades. "Maybe it's the silence, maybe it's the war," he continues. It sets the tone for an album that articulates troubling, state-of-the-nation observations with quixotic musical ambitions. Songs like No Reptiles and Regret show the breadth of their herky-jerky musical scope but are ultimately anchored by Higgs's earnest delivery and absurdist dispatches (the hook of the former, "It's all right to feel like a fat child in a pushchair old enough to run", is wildly disorientating). No easy listen, *Get To Heaven* feels both like a band at the peak of their powers and self-consciously dialling everything up to 11 before things go up in flames. Information overload.

Priya Elan

Miaoux Miaoux
★★★★

School Of Velocity

CHEMIKAL UNDERGROUND. CD/DL/LP

Glossy, forward-thinking synth-pop by one-man sound machine Julian Corrie.

Julian Corrie is a bona fide sonic alchemist. Having shown off a rare ability to craft warm, emotional dance fare from banks of cold machinery on his debut *Light Of The North*, the Glasgow-based sound engineer has cast off that album's genre-hopping missteps for a melodic *tour de force* that plays to his songwriting strengths. More a refinement than a revolution, there's a timelessness to the way the woozy careening chorus of A Flutter Echo, giant MOR chords of Luxury Discovery or four-to-the-floor immediacy of It's The Quick build and swell which owes a debt to house, trance and electro. Topped with a bittersweet voice somewhere between Scritti Politti's Green and Hot Chip's Alexis Taylor, there's not a false dance step on this hyper-real adventure in shimmering pop.

Andy Cowan

Princess Chelsea

★★★

The Great Cybernetic Depression

FLYING NUN/LIL' CHIEF. CD/DL/LP

New Zealander Chelsea Nikkel's second "retro-futurist" album.

"Princess Chelsea" suggests bubblegum rap, not desolate electronic ballads inspired by the lonely life of a DIY musician in a 'faraway' world – hence the "metaphorical world event" of *The Great Cybernetic Depression*. It's more sophisticated than Nikkel's 2011 debut *Lil' Golden Book*, which was preceded by her contribution to NZ's The Brunettes, whose linchpin Jonathan Bree is Nikkel's multi-instrumental/co-producing foil here. He's a co-singer in the Lynchian dark of We Are Strangers, one of four playing dulcet Lee Hazlewood to Nikkel's Ann-Margret; without them, she sounds more distressed, on such as We're So Lost, where Joe Meek meets The Shangri-Las and Beach House in a space age bachelorette pad of infinite tears. It's like a '60s folk siren emerging from a 50-year sleep capsule to discover the world is all MP3s and Facebook – enough to make anyone depressed.

Martin Aston

Blanck Mass

★★★

Dumb Flesh

SACRED BONES. CD/DL/LP

Fuck Button man adopts brawnier stance on second LP.

On his 2011 debut as Blanck Mass, Benjamin John Power strove to differentiate his solo sound from Fuck Buttons' oppressive scene energy with an ambient techno sweep, possessing a quasi-spiritual vibe. One track, Sundowner, even made it into the Underworld-curated London Olympics opening ceremony. So some may be disappointed to find *Dumb Flesh* adopting a muscular attack, more in keeping with Power's other project. Cruel Sport and Detritus swell to bursting point with a cascade of distorted noise – albeit without masking some rather lovely melodies buried deep in their core. Loam, meanwhile, is underpinned by that staple of Power's alma mater, a heavy drone. Only on the twinkly, Balearic chug of Lung does he come close to capturing the vibe of that debut. Still, you can't accuse Power of resting on his laurels – although it's at the expense of some of that first record's unique character.

Stephen Worthy

Thee Oh Sees

★★★★

Mutilator Defeated At Last

CASTLE FACE. CD/DL/LP

A new town, a new band, but Thee Oh Sees' needling psych-punk rocks on.

The change in Thee Oh Sees' sound since John Dwyer left San Francisco for Los Angeles isn't as jarring as when he shifted from lo-fi introspection to dusted psych-beat on 2008's *Master's Bedroom…*, but the differences are worth noting. More confident than last year's transitional *Drop*, this new line-up's second album together finds Nick Murray's drumming busy and complex, but thrillingly so, lending sophistication to the band's trademark thrash-psych. Elsewhere, Dwyer is happy to slow the tempo and indulge melody over dynamics – the regal glide of Sticky Hulks is misty and mesmeric, while the folk of Holy Smoke haunts like Ben Chasny. Lovers of Dwyer's guitar freakouts, meanwhile, are directed to Lupine Ossuary's chaotic hurtle and Withered Hand's heavy stomp, ricocheting between frazzled fret-wrangling and FX-phased witchcraft with an ever-electrifying flair. Poor Queen, meanwhile, is his finest pop song yet.

Stevie Chick

Star dust quality: Princess Chelsea, emerging from a 50-year time capsule.

Grasscut

★★★★

Everyone Was A Bird

LO RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP

Further adventures of the ethereal folktronic duo.

Grasscut have long made explicit their music's ties to the British landscape – from the animals that inhabit it to its topographic contours. *Everyone Was A Bird* reaffirms that bond with winsome, pastoral electronic vignettes that loop and swoop, reflecting the places they hold dear – the undulations of the South Downs or the watery ornithological haven of the Mawddach Estuary. TV soundtrack composer Andrew Phillips and Marcus O'Dair create a mood that's emotive but not cloying. So, Fallswater is presented like a Britannic spiritual, strings building with ever-increasing intensity, shimmering percussion rolling in waves. Phillips' vocals are compelling throughout, as airy and meandering as the accompanying music, much impact coming from Grasscut's judicious deployment of vocal samples. Hilaire Belloc, Sir Basil Spence and World War I poet Siegfried Sassoon all 'appear', the latter embellishing the grand, and suitably soaring, folk pop closer Red Kite.

Stephen Worthy

White Manna

★★★★

Pan

CARDINAL FUZZ. CD/DL/LP

Bleached out, dramatic score to America's wilds.

While UK psych acts tend to journey inward in the face of madness, their US peers like to externalise thoughts crammed in their chaotic minds. So *Pan*, White Manna's fourth studio album in as many years, is a cathartic soundscaping of the rugged northern California landscape; in particular of Humboldt Bay, where the five-piece reside, and Manila, where they write. Recorded live to tape at San Francisco's Lucky Cat Recording – a real treasure trove filled with tube/vintage mikes, pre-amps, compressors, vintage API 2824 mixing console et al – it's produced by Phil Manley (Trans Am), who keeps everything fuzzy, distorted and in the red. Equal parts Stooges punk, Hawkwind space rock and Komische beat, their tidal wave of noise is dense, intimidating and unforgiving, best exemplified on the title track, an angry, chaotic squall dedicated to the Greek god.

Lois Wilson

ELECTRONICA

BY STEPHEN WORTHY

Herbert

★★★★

The Shakes

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

Enigmatic alt-house grandee uses anger as his energy.

NO ONE balances the challenging and experimental with melody and groove quite like Matthew Herbert. Recent albums by the Creative Director of the New Radiophonic Workshop have veered towards the former, whether sampling pigs or exploding ordnance, but on *The Shakes* he parades his full polyglottic tendencies. On Smart, the mesh of competing rhythms and plink-plonk piano explode into a joyous carnival shakedown. Herbert says his demeanour during recording was darkened by society's widening disparity though you wouldn't know it from the first half. But if Strong's spiritual stomp has a thrilling simplicity, its lyrics highlight social divisions and it's constructed from samples of UK street protests; while Safety's fractured rhythm is tapped out using shell casings found on eBay. Near the end the mood darkens further on the elegant, trembling Silence, closing an album featuring some of Herbert's most engaging work since 2001's *Bodily Functions*.

ALSO RELEASED

Glenn Astro

★★★★

Throwback

TARTELET. DL/LP

Glenn Astro's debut album follows recent Tartelet offerings from fellow German Max Graef and Denmark's, Uffe which mix up glowing organic house, loose-limbed funk and old-school hip hop vibes. Jazzier than Graef's, less stoned than Uffe's, with the fractured rhythms underpinning Throwback and crackly, sax'n'Rhodes shuffle of One For Viktor, Astro confidently pitches his tent at the intersection where Madlib and Moodymann meet.

Maribou State

★★★★

Portraits

COUNTER. CD/DL/LP

Chris Davids and Liam Ivory deliver an exercise in soulful, somnambulant alt-R&B with a distinctively British sound. Heavy with bass and ladles of atmosphere – notably Say More – there's more than a trace of James Blake's post-dubstep confessionals, while the organic electronica of Golden Panda and The xx's gauzy, guitar-strewn indietronica are further touchstones.

Breakage

★★★★

When The Night Comes

DIGITAL SOUNDBOY. CD/DL/LP

Having earned his stripes making drum'n'bass, BRIT School alumni James Boyle is now a purveyor of canny, foundation-shaking urban pop. It's executed with broad strokes, an array of guest vocalists supplying nagging choruses over house and R&B tropes accompanied by an all-pervasive, grand bass wobble. I On U and Dedication, meanwhile, act as vestigial reminders of Breakage's junglist past.

Kölsch

★★★

1983

KOMPAKT. CD/DL/LP

Kölsch's strain of techno eschews industrial attack in favour of a melodious take on trance. Inspired by childhood road trips from Denmark to France, its rhythms sit in cruise control, melodies bursting through like sun out of cloud. E45 and Papageno 30 Years Later possess a throbbing Balearic heart, although an over-proliferation of fluffy beats and soaring strings may have you hankering for something tougher. *SW*

FILTER ALBUMS

Vangelis
COACHMEN
WFMU

Meg Baird: an old-time folk mood of contemplation.

The Darkness

★★★

Last Of Our Kind

CANARY DWARF/KOBALT LABEL SERVICES. CD/DL/LP

Suffolk punch – fourth time around for Lowestoft's greatest rock export.

It must be galling to be a supposedly serious hard rock band only to discover that the supposedly not-so-serious Darkness have stockpiled all the best riffs – again. *Last Of Our Kind* is testament to frontman Justin Hawkins' past life as an ad jingle writer and his band's way with a good hook. However, with Americans Steel Panther now filling arenas with their one-trick-pony take on '80s glam-metal, it means The Darkness are now a slightly subtler proposition. There's nothing here to match their gonzo 2003 hit I Believe In A Thing Called Love, confirming in true Spinal Tap style that their appeal really is "becoming more selective". But there's still laugh-out-loud silliness (Mudslide), tales of Vikings plundering East Anglia (Barbarian) and an extraordinarily deft Queen-meets-Fleetwood Mac power ballad, Sarah O'Sarah. Supposedly serious rock bands should be very afraid.

Mark Blake

Jenny Hval

★★★

Apocalypse, Girl

SACRED BONES. CD/DL/LP

A lush frame for Norway's intimate bard on fifth LP.

Jenny Hval
Apocalypse, girl

Jenny Hval's fifth solo album opens by quoting the Danish poet Mette Moestrup in the precise tones of a speaking clock: "think big girl, like a king, think king size." From here on in – on her first album for an American label – Norway's Hval is less terse but nonetheless tackles what could be awkward for a less adroit artist. Although more about the interpersonal than previously, the themes are familiarly Hval's: the body, its urges and how it makes the person. Lyrics are typically explicit: genitals and the yearning to fuck figure. As do bananas. Discordancy is softened by Hval's bell-clear voice, pattering beats, strings and keyboard wash. Melodies are as pure as those of a sung canticle. Considering this broad palette, it is surprising Hval's producer is Lasse Marhaug, more usually associated with improv-noise. Sumptuous, but still challenging.

Kieron Tyler

Melody Gardot

★★★★

Currency Of Man

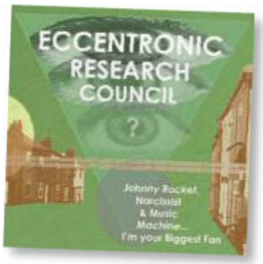
DECCA. CD/DL

Honey-voiced Philadelphia chanteuse goes raw'n'retro.

MELODY GARDOT

In the past, her name has largely been synonymous with smoky jazz sophistication but on her fourth album, Melody Gardot, 30, explores what is for her uncharted territory. While 2012's *The Absence* was an exotic world music adventure, *Currency Of Man* is darker and more monochromatic, delving into '60s and '70s rhythm and blues. The brooding opener, It's Gonna Come, is a chunk of Norman Whitfield-inspired badass funk while the politically-charged Preacherman is a searing, gritty blues sermon. But it's not all strident and visceral. Gardot's beautifully plangent tones shine on a clutch of fine slower songs, exemplified by the beatific Morning Sun and Don't Misunderstand with its gorgeous swooning strings. This is a radical musical departure, certainly, but one that affirms the assured versatility of a singer/songwriter whose talent knows no boundaries.

Charles Waring


ECCENTRONIC RESEARCH COUNCIL
Johnny Rocket, Narcissist & Music Machine... I'm your Biggest Fan

Eccentronic Research Council

★★★

Johnny Rocket, Narcissist & Music Machine… I'm Your Biggest Fan

WITHOUT CONSENT. CD/DL/LP

Second album from Adrian Flanagan, Maxine Peake and Dean Honer.

A concept album comprising 22 demented songs in 44 demented minutes, it is set in the fictional South Yorkshire town of Valhalla Dale and unreliably narrated by the estimable Maxine Peake as a stalker in pursuit of Johnny Rocket, the fictional singer of fictional band The Moonlandingz (a real-life collaboration with Lias Saoudi and Saul Adamczewski of The Fat White Family). To further blur fiction and reality, there is a Moonlandingz track here, Sweet Saturn Mine; it is absolute belting filth, all sinister squelchy synths and got-the-self-loathing-horn lyrics. The feeling overall is darkly, deeply Northern, and there is no solid ground. From the Daphne Oram-ish whirrs and clicks on I Am Mearley A Flute Lament In The Mind Of A Nuisance to the hints of 2 Unlimited on I Spy On J. Rocket…, and the troubled tales of Margaret Thatcher's secret lovechild, ERC leave you wrongfooted and, just like that stalker, oddly aroused.

Anna Wood

Bad Guys

★★★★

Bad Guynaecology

RIOT SEASON. CD/DL/LP

North London four-piece on turbo-charged rock'n'roll rampage.

Already an on-stage *tour de force*, this second Bad Guys album shows them able to replicate their relentless power-chord pummel in the studio. With dual double-necked guitars providing the riffs and a frontman resembling some backwoods biker-meth chef growling out tales of stolen Tonka trucks (Crime), suburban sex for sale (Prostitutes (Are Making Love In My Garden)) and doom-laden interplanetary destruction (World Murderer), *Bad Guynaecology* is a twisted feast of histrionic rock. Equal parts of wry humour, bare-chested showmanship and all-levelling heaviness, it warrants positive comparison with metallic kinsmen such as Melvins, High On Fire and Ten Benson. Those on the hunt for a hard-driving hit of tongue-in-cheek gonzoid genius can call off the search right now.

Andrew Carden

The Word

★★★★

Soul Food

VANGUARD. CD/DL/LP

The return of a gospel-funk supergroup.

Fourteen years ago, jazz keyboardist John Medeski got together with pedal steelie Robert Randolph and North Mississippi Allstars Luther Dickinson (guitar), Chris Chew (bass) and Cody Dickinson (drums) to form The Word and create a debut album that reaped superlatives from all sides. Belatedly, but thankfully, they have returned for this welcome second offering, recorded in New York and Memphis. It's mainly instrumental, though Ruthie Foster and Amy Helm contribute gospel-drenched vocals on two tracks, this is killer stuff, with Randolph providing a supply of unbelievable sacred steel licks, while Medeski, freed from the confines of Medeski-Martin-Wood, sprays funky fills at every opportunity. The heat on such jam tracks as Soul Food II is terrific, while the happy hoedown that's Chocolate Cowboy is a high-kicking joy. Hallelujah was never so hip.

Fred Dellar

meg baird
Don't weigh down the light

Meg Baird

★★★★

Don't Weigh Down The Light

WICHITA. CD/DL/LP

Third solo outing from Espers songsmith.

Stepping into Meg Baird's world is like being lost in a medieval forest, a surreal place where ancient English ballads are sweetened and deepened with Appalachian mountain dulcimer and Laurel Canyon guitar. Nothing here is hurried; there's an old-time folk mood of contemplation that's still supple and new. The opener, Counterfeiters, is typical: rich, languid pedal steel, notes like ghostly whale cries echo in the background and an ethereal voice, innocent but strong at its core. Mosquito Hawks has a jazzy, Joni Mitchell warmth, and Past Houses drapes skeins of silken guitar around simple words: "Though you left me hanging…/I stayed up all night/Just to see what would happen/Anyway, there were places to go…" Loneliness, resilience, self-possession. Things can get twee – but this feels like a tiny church in that forest, sacred and touching.

Glyn Brown

Jaakko Eino Kalevi

★★★★

Jaakko Eino Kalevi

WEIRD WORLD/DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Misty synth-dance gem from Finland's former tram driver.

It ends with Ikuinen Purkautumaton Jännite, a six-minute epic journeying between Satie-esque minimalism and Jean Michel Jarre surfing an endless breaker. Imagine the spoken-word section of Visage's Fade To Grey in Saturn's orbit. The Finnish-language title translates as Eternal Ejected Voltage. It begins with J.E.K., where the album's self-referencing maker sets his agenda with misty sax and pulsing, rolling synth. Between: disco, Michael Jackson and synth-pop are rendered in similar soft focus. The eponymous *Jaakko Eino Kalevi* is around the eleventh album from the Finnish sonic auteur: his discography is hard to unpick as he's a serial collaborator and has issued two albums as Jaakko Savolainen – how his mum and dad know him; 'Kalevi' nods to the Finnish national poem The Kalevala. The lovely *Jaakko Eino Kalevi*, the most coherent album so far from this former Helsinki tram driver, is a gem.

Kieron Tyler

Jaga Jazzist

★★★

Starfire

NINJA TUNE. CD/DL/LP

First album in five years from Norway's jazzy boundary breakers is less elastic than before.

Where 2010's *One-Armed Bandit* was ornate, *Starfire* is focused. Where instruments jostled for attention, they now line up in martial precision. What hasn't changed though is Jaga Jazzist's unique approach to music. *Starfire*'s five instru-mental pieces are nominally a '70s fusion-infused jazz but dive off into cascading electronica and interludes suggesting *Hergest Ridge* Mike Oldfield battling it out with John Barry and The Moody Blues. No one piece takes a linear path. Nothing goes where it might be expected to go. In the period between the two albums, Jaga Jazzist's main-man Lars Horntveth decamped to Los Angeles and *Starfire* was assembled in Norway from what he had recorded there on his own. As a result, this is less organic, more brittle and electronic than before and begs to be opened out in a live setting.

Kieron Tyler

The Selecter

★★★

Subculture

DMF. CD/DL/LP

Neil Pyzer-produced, Prince Fatty-mixed follow-up to 2013's *String Theory*.

Earlier this year The Selecter, centred around frontwoman Pauline Black and original toaster Arthur 'Gaps' Hendrickson, celebrated the 35th anniversary of their 2 Tone debut *Too Much Pressure* by performing the album in its entirety for the first time around the country. See Them A Come and band original Open Goal here could both date from that time; the former a rude boy cover of Mr Foundation's Studio One anthem, the latter a ball of punk ska energy. The rest of *Subculture* spreads the net wider though – Box Fresh, about musical new beginnings, is the kind of pop reggae released on the Trojan label in the late '60s; Breakdown is a heavy protest dub featuring mournful trombone and eerie melodica; It Never Worked Out, sung by Gaps, is pure lovers rock.

Lois Wilson

Jaakko Eino Kalevi: music to make the trams run on time.

Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams

★★★★

Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams

RED HOUSE. CD/DL

The first couple of Americana make their recorded debut.

It's the *bigness* of their sound that distinguishes Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams from many other Americana artists – they've made a sonic commitment to the songs. And their voices mesh like a marriage – which is not so very surprising given that Campbell and Williams are a husband-and-wife team, and for years were bandmates with Levon Helm until his 2012 passing. Campbell is a string king (picked or bowed, he's mastered it) and top-of-the-heap hired gun who spent eight years playing with Bob Dylan. Williams is a Tennessee girl who grew up singing in church and it shows when the ecstatic spirit lifts her up in the Reverend Gary Davis's Keep Your Lamp Trimmed And Burning. They also cover The Louvin Brothers and the Grateful Dead here, and Campbell is writing old classics *now*. Dig Down On My Knees – a heartbreaking ballad of humility and regret indicates that we are in the presence of pros.

Michael Simmons

Simply Red

★★

Big Love

EAST WEST. CD/DL

Hard-to-admire eleventh album from Mick Hucknall's reformed band.

Their first album since 2007's *Stay* and first comprising all Mick Hucknall originals since 1995's *Life*, *Big Love* celebrates the group's 30th anniversary and features all but one member of Simply Red's last line-up, which split in 2010. Produced by Andy Wright, it was conceived as a blue-eyed soul album, drawing on the group's roots, but it's a world away from their 1985 debut single, an edgy cover of The Valentine Brothers' Money's Too Tight To Mention. Hucknall is still an enthusiastic fan – his debut solo album, 2008's *Tribute To Bobby*, paid well-meaning homage to Bobby 'Blue' Bland; he helped fund reggae label Blood And Fire – but his own music lacks the same conviction here. No doubt it will chart high and sell millions, but its icky love songs sadly have no beating heart, and very little soul.

Lois Wilson

WORLD

BY DAVID HUTCHEON

Cheikh Lô

★★★★

Balbalou

CHAPTER TWO. CD/DL/LP

If you're looking for a man what takes his time, here is Mr Reliable.

CHEIKH LÔ has never been the most prolific singer in Senegal – approaching his sixties, he has taken five years to record his fifth album, the follow-up to the excellent *Jamm* – so it's a good job he knows exactly what it is he is doing. Having developed his own loping rhythm, with reggae basslines and hyperactive talking drums, the Dakar-based dread (he is a member of the Muslim Baye Fall sect rather than a Rasta) keeps alive the old West African adaptation of Cuban music, yet adds plenty of international flavour. On the stand-out tracks, that includes French accordionist Fixi and Brazilian pop star Flavia Coelho (Degg Gui) and Lebanese jazz trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf (Balbalou). Add in the sweeping strings on Baisson Les Armes and you have a perfect argument for hoping he takes his time over album number six – but quickly.

ALSO RELEASED

Souad Massi

★★★★

El Mutakallimûn (Masters Of The Word)

WRASSE. CD/DL

Using classic Arabic texts as her inspiration, the Algerian-Berber singer has turned in a set of, on the face of it, rather lovely summery folk songs. Scratch below the surface, however, and she's sending a message of support to all those resisting tyranny and twisted versions of her religion. Her voice is infused with melancholy but the results are uplifting.

Tal National

★★★★

Zoy Zoy

FAT CAT. CD/DL/LP

Fans of the Niger-based band's previous international release, 2013's *Kaani*, will be delighted this one makes no more sense: the musicians still play rumba, high life and a myriad other African guitar styles almost simultaneously, songs leaping borders without warning. So rhythmically dense is the result, the band refer to their sound as "very rock'n'roll". Can't argue.

Plaza Francia

★★★★

A New Tango Song Book

BECAUSE. CD/DL/LP

The Gotan Project bubble was allegedly burst, but in recruiting veteran French rock star Catherine Ringer (late of Les Rita Mitsouko), the Argentinians have returned reinvigorated and less electronic. She sounds born to front strings, piano and bandoneon, her Buenos Aires Spanish apparently passes muster, and the songs, deliberately and unashamedly targeted at a crossover audience, are just gorgeous.

Dele Sosimi

★★★★

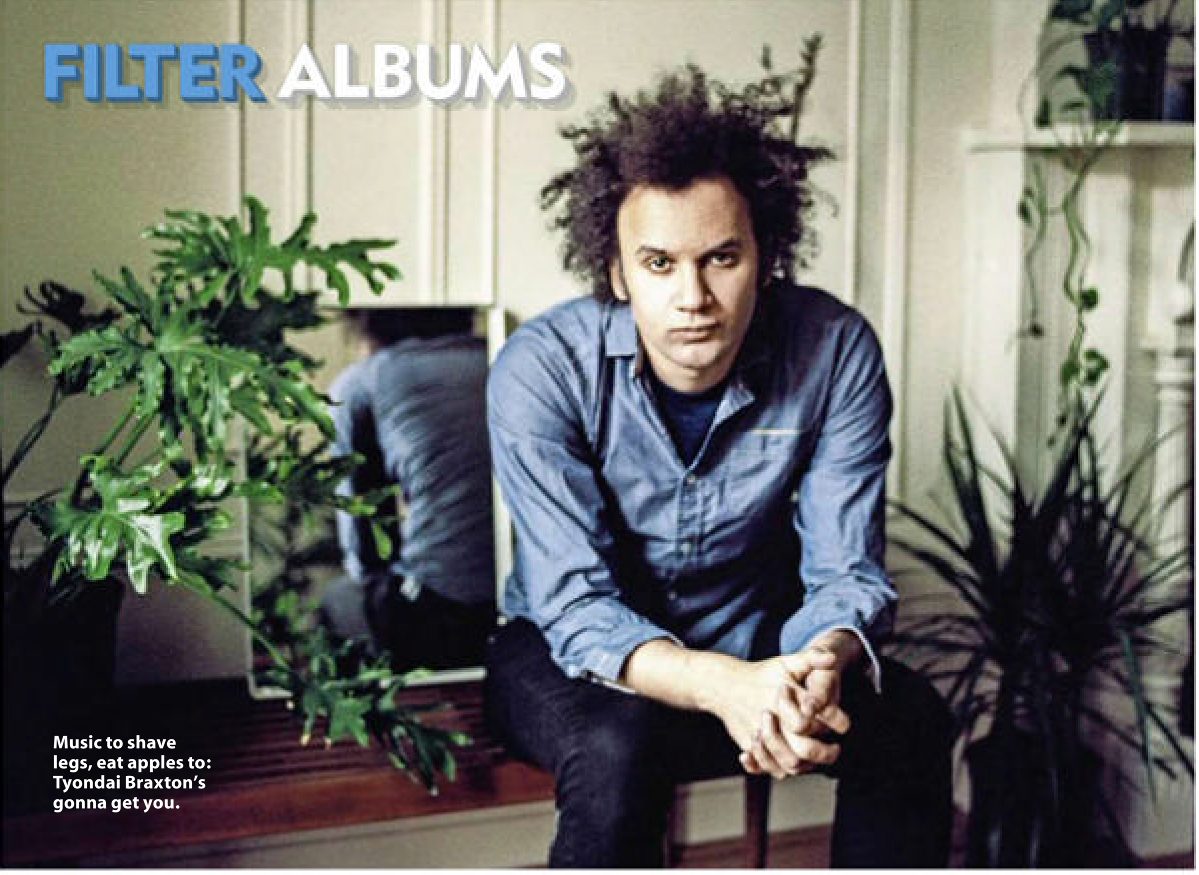
You No Fit Touch Am

WAH WAH 45S. CD/DL/LP

Sosimi joined Fela Kuti as a teenage keyboard prodigy, then became musical director for both the Egypt 80 and Femi Kuti's Positive Force, and he and his London-based orchestra don't stray from the Afrobeat path on this, his third album. It's a deeper, moodier collection than other Shrine veterans have released lately – a dub version could be a stone killer. *DH*

Harley Weir

FILTER ALBUMS


Music to shave legs, eat apples to: Tyondai Braxton's gonna get you.

Dusdin Condren

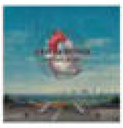
Zervas & Pepper

★★★★

Abstract Heart

ZERODEO. CD/DL

West Coast sounds from a talented Welsh duo.



For some it's a hard-knock life trying to catch the ear of an audience. This is Zervas & Pepper's third album and it must be disappointing for the talented duo that they haven't already made the grade as far as appreciation on a major scale is concerned. Perhaps they've arrived too late, stepping up to the plate in an era when harmonies straight out of the Crosby, Stills & Nash textbook don't mean much any more. Shame. For Paul Zervas and Kathryn Pepper have some exquisite sounds to peddle. OK, nothing here quite catches the ear like Buffalo Crow, one of the most memorable tracks of 2013, but the opening Miller gets close and the psych-pop We Are The One is a guaranteed attention-grabber, as is Celestial Friend, which features Indian sounds provided by Matt Malley of Counting Crows.

Fred Dellar

Rozi Plain

★★★★

Friend

LOST MAP. CD/DL/LP

Stellar third alt-folk set from Fence Collective alumna.

Born in Winchester, matured in Bristol, now based in London but forever on tour, Plain's deeply wistful melodies here make tantalising paths across filigrees of electric guitar and happy-sad synth tones, often propelled by her first venture into skittering rhythm, while her voice remains calm at the centre. The album benefits from subtle enhancements, from Best Team's velvet palette of horns to Rearrange's *faux* oboe colours; Friend City's Afro-pop timbre is elevated by handclaps and call-and-response lead/backing vox while the album's most gorgeous moment, Red Dot, stokes up ember glows with a pale, nagging guitar motif to carry a message about life's transience: should she use a red or green dot to mark her calendar with another missed opportunity? Plain makes urban disquiet sound like the most exquisitely blissed-out experience imaginable.

Martin Aston

THE BARKER BAND
THE LAND WE HOLD DEAR

The Barker Band

★★★

The Land We Hold Dear

BB. CD/DL

Titular twins leading English folk-bluegrass aces… in a pop direction?

Well, maybe, although their sixth album's tangiest track draws its uninhibited, cold brutality from ancient tradition. In Cut Up His Face, Nella Johnson's rich mid-range voice speculates – over dead drumbeat and tart banjo lick – about whether to turn "pretty women" away from her beau by slicing him… so she gives it a go "and the pretty women they loved him more". Damn, eh? But you couldn't do that in the charts, cultural health and safety you know. Whereas several other compositions – You Took The Best Of Me, Cry, Cry, Cry and Take My Love – feel a pop rearrangement away from mainstream sales. The Barkers make lovely sounds nearly all the time. Only their three lead singers' diction permits intermittent listener drift, given folk's storytelling remit – it doesn't happen if you mush-mouth the words.

Phil Sutcliffe

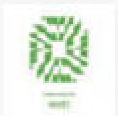
Tyondai Braxton

★★★★

Hivel

NONESUCH. CD/DL/LP

Art installation becomes third solo album from the US experimental composer.



There is a juicy territory where cerebral, avant-garde composition mixes with visceral, whoomp-whoomp dance music; former Battles frontman and Philip Glass collaborator Tyondai Braxton explores that territory with skill and glee. These eight tracks were made for a 2013 installation-performance where five players (with modular synths, laptops and a lot of wonderful percussion) sat on glowing platforms in the reverby (and rather hive-like) Frank Lloyd Wright-designed rotunda of New York's Guggenheim. The rarefied surrounds must have been some contrast to the beats, pulses and squelches here. Tracks that will keep you waiting forever for the drop still have a corporeal appeal (recommended: crunching on an apple while listening to Gracka on headphones; shaving your legs to Boids). Amlochley is a seven-minute highbrow banger; Scout1 is a fizzing, frantic stomper; even on the most delicate pieces, the rhythm is definitely gonna get you.

Anna Wood

GRAHAM PARKER
MYSTERY GLUE
AND THE RUMOUR

Graham Parker And The Rumour

★★★★

Mystery Glue

CADET CONCEPT. CD/DL

Pub reunites with rock as legends settle into scintillating second wind.

Reunited on-screen in 2012 to cameo in the Judd Apatow movie This Is 40, Graham Parker and his '70s comrades The Rumour rewound 32 years apart with the end-to-end pleasure of the album *Three Chords Good* then a tour. Things went so well they're at it again. Though Surrey's erstwhile new-Dylan still does spiky – echoing 1979's You Can't Be Too Strong, 2012's Coathangers tackled the abortion issue – the hunger to compete with his peers (and now fans) Springsteen, Costello and Petty is long gone. Today, as the highlight Pub Crawl drolly celebrates, the vibe is six herberts sinking the sherbets inviting you over for banter, yarns, setting the world to rights and all the fun of rhyme, rhythm, blues and country-rock back in the day. For all *Mystery Glue*'s beady-geezer caustic edge, cheers!

Mat Snow

American Aquarium

★★★

Wolves

BLUE ROSE. CD/DL

The South is beginning to rise again

American Aquarium's 2012 album *Burn, Flicker, Die* was supposed to be the big goodbye for BJ Barham's band of Southern rockers after many years on the road. But things didn't work out that way. Somehow, the band's been revitalised and despite the array of doubts and self put-downs that permeate Barham's lyrics, there is much to impress here on an album sparked by the opening Family Problems which, following Barham's declaration that he's a broken man, ends in an absolute maelstrom of sound. The self-deprecation that flows throughout the album also pervades the excellent title track ("I'll always be the one to let you down") and Who Needs A Song ("I'll never drive a fancy car"). But as is likely when Barham muses, "We're never gonna be The Rolling Stones," American Aquarium is, at least and at last, a band on the rise.

Fred Dellar

Kate Pierson

★★★

Guitars And Microphones

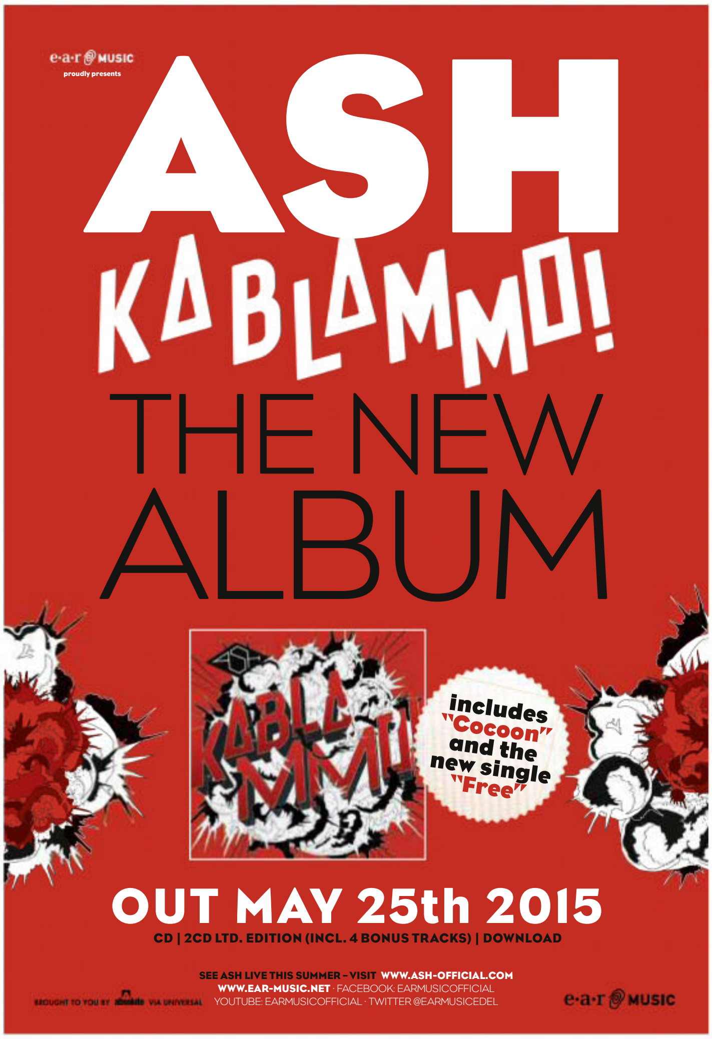
LAZY MEADOW/KOBALT. CD/DL

Debut solo release from the woman who once sang Rock Lobster.

KATE PIERSON

The B-52's defined an era – shockingly, the late 1970s/early 1980s, though the legacy glitters on. Their splashy new wave mixed surrealism and lurid sci-fi, the equal of The Cramps and Deee-Lite – and Kate Pierson's yelping, soulful voice defined them. Now here she is at 66, looking and sounding 36. Known for anthemic pop chops, her songs are full of girl group feistiness. But not all of them. Things start swimmingly on the Shangri-Las-style Throw Down The Roses, a sneery feminist romp ("I don't ever do/Rocker boys like you/I'm an artist, too!"). Next up, Mister Sister continues that tone, a supportive, finger-snapping take on gender-bending. Meanwhile, Crush Me With Your Love is a swoonsome ballad that could've been ripped from the heart of The Rocky Horror Show. Elsewhere, though, tracks meander and lose their pep and zing – Pierson's piercing vocal crying out for Fred Schneider's balancing baritone.

Glyn Brown



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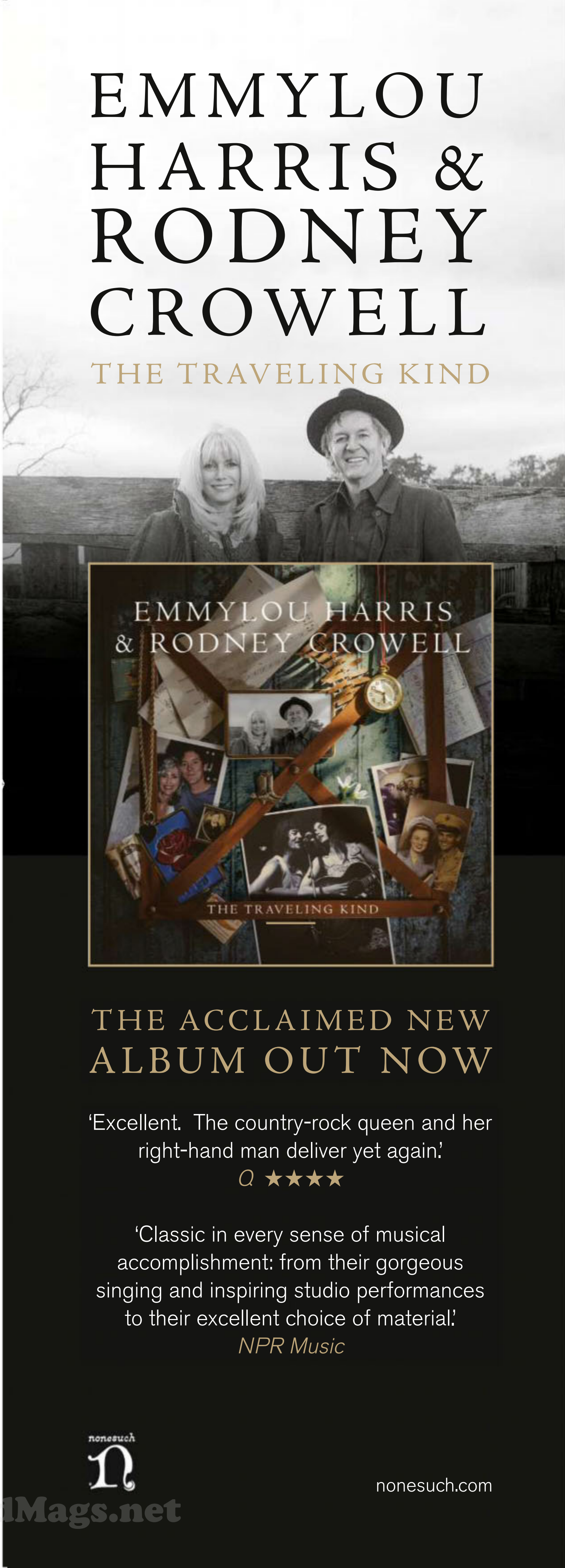

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ACP RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP

With vocals from Robert Smith, Ed Harcourt and Cillian Murphy, Orbital's Paul Hartnoll presents muscular yet graceful techno and mysterious, wood-carved electro-enigmas, like the pagan cover of The Cure's A Forest sung by The Unthanks. *IH*

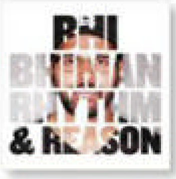
Admiral Fallow

★★★

Tiny Rewards

NETTWERK. CD/DL

The result of an 18-month "experiment" in which the Scots folk rock six-piece's traditional acoustic sound was dialled down with synths to create subtler atmospherics. Even so, it's the lushest melodies here on their third LP that stand out. *SW*



Bhi Bhiman

★★★★

Rhythm & Reason

BOOCOO/THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

Bhiman's distinctive soulful voice and expansive stylistic range make him hard to pin down in a sentence (um, Arthur Lee fronting The Roots?). But his agile tunes, wry social commentary and wit are easy, and apt, to admire. *JB*

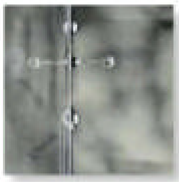
The Catenary Wires

★★★★

Red Red Skies

ELEFANT. CD/DL/LP

Grand Poobahs of Brit indie Amelia Fletcher and Rob Pursey (Talulah Gosh, Heavenly) return as a duo full of humour, heartache and Magnetic Fields-levels of arid self-awareness. *JB*



The Church

★★★

Further/Deeper

UNORTHODOX. CD/DL/LP

Powderfinger's Ian Haug joins the reformed Church to mesh guitars with Peter Koppes on a dreamy, disconsolate LP that, while hardly departing from the formula of dignified gloom and glide, certainly benefits from the restoration. *JB*

Donald Cumming

★★★

Out Calls Only

WASHINGTON SQUARE. CD/DL/LP

Not so much this year's model as 1980's, the former Virgins frontman has created a work of faithful homage to the likes of Costello and Tom Petty, yet there's enough bittersweet emotion to ensure his own personality seeps through. *PS*

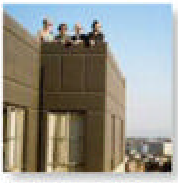
The Milk Carton Kids

★★★

Monterey

ANTI . CD/DL/LP

Garlanded LA duo whose sweet harmonics and filigreed guitars bear comparison to Simon & Garfunkel on these pretty road ruminations, partly recorded – pre-gig – at US concerts. *JB*



PINS

★★★★

Wild Nights

BELLA UNION CD/DL/LP

Evoking the artiness of C86 and a riot grrrl rawness, the second album by Manchester's PINS is more refined than their 2013 debut but no less impactful. The dreamy riffs swirl amid powerful songwriting smarts, and melodic hooks abound. *SW*

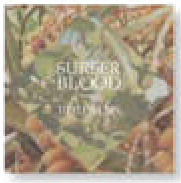
Prinzhorn Dance School

★★★

Home Economics

DFA/PIAS. CD/DL/LP

This mini-LP ladles grooves on PDS's stripped post-punk. The space between drums, bass and guitar is filled by the Toby Prinz and Suzi Horn's estuarine vocal interplay, lending intimacy. *SW*



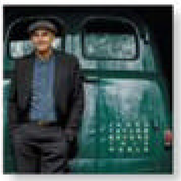
Surfer Blood

★★★

1000 Palms

FIERCE PANDA. CD/DL/LP

Following a chastising major label stint, the Florida quartet are back in friendlier waters and sounding less bullishly Vampire Weekendish than on 2010's *Astro Coast*. This guileless, wistfully romantic harmony pop suits them much better. *JB*



James Taylor

★★★

Before This World

DECCA. CD/DL/LP

Taylor's first album of new songs in 13 years is a low-key affair, pleasing but lacking his early melodic strength. Yo-Yo Ma and Sting guest, while Wild Mountain Thyme – famously played by Dylan at the Isle Of Wight – is an ideal closer. *FD*

Total Babes

★★★★

Heydays

WICHITA. CD/DL/LP

Exhilarating Ohio popoid punk, with Cloud Nothings' drummer, some warmly familiar Sonic Youth-like guitar spook, Bob Mouldian vocal angst and Superchunk-level euphoria. Fans of pre-grunge American alt-rock come on in. *JB*

Wolf Alice

★★★

My Love Is Cool

DIRTY HIT. CD/DL/LP

London indie hopefuls' debut blends '90s alt-rock and modern electronic influences, but ultimately proves hard to get a handle on. Ellie Roswell's hypnotising, sassy vocal stylings, however, show real riot grrrl potential. *SW*

Woody Woodgate

★★★

In Your Mind

DW. CD/DL

Madness's drummer's solo debut, with vocals from Dan Shears. Amid songs about holidaying in Brighton and shamanic visions, its benign Beatlesy pop with proggy touches proves once a Nutty Boy, always a Nutty Boy. *IH*

NOWSTREAMING

Kamasi Washington

The Epic

Having blasted tender tenor licks over Kendrick Lamar's future classic *To Pimp A Butterfly*, Washington shows no let-up on his ambitious Brainfeeder debut. Backed by members of LA collective West Coast Get Down, a choir and a 32-piece orchestra, *The Epic* boldly aims to overhaul jazz for the progressive hip hop generation. An immersive affair, whose lengthy tracks are made lush by gospel choruses and smooth by sweeping strings, Washington's close affinity with his fellow players assuring there's no lazy grandstanding or egomaniacal showboating as it rifles through gospel, funk and swing on a monumental 175-minute journey. (npr.org) *AC*

Ho99o9

P.O.W.

From new EP Horrors Of 1999, the LA duo's rattling thrash and slow-grind doom raps place them in the same sonic cesspit as Death Grips. (SoundCloud)

Nosaj Thing

Cold Stares

From insidious new LP *Fated*, the understated West Coast producer marries spare electronic flickers to Chance The Rapper's spooked musings. (Spotify)

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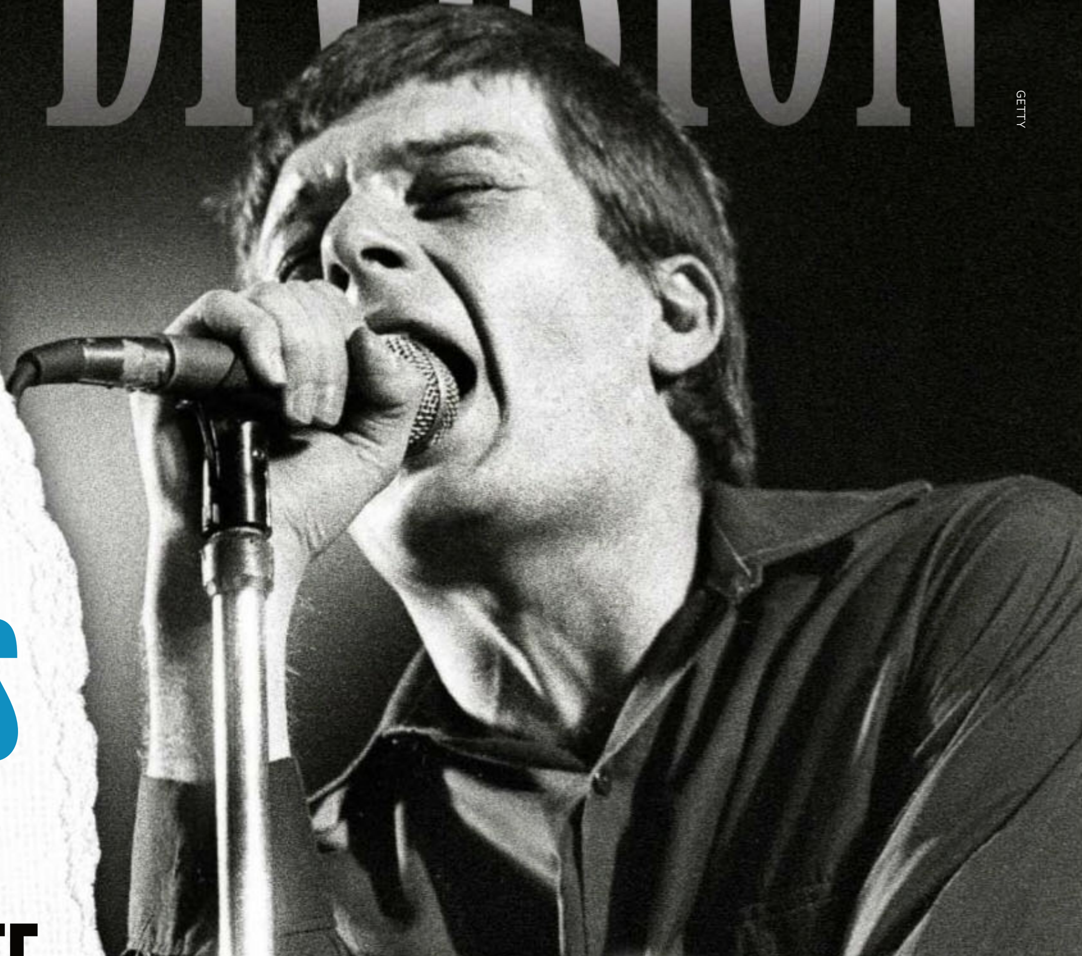
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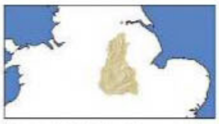

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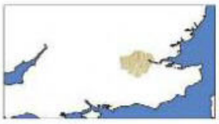

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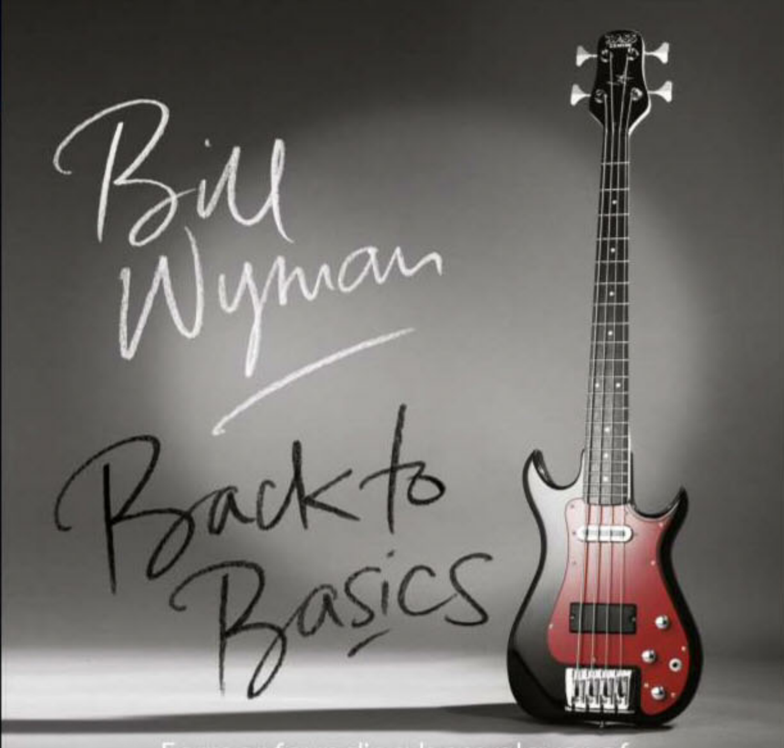
MOJO STORE OF THE MONTH

South Wales

Dales Records
40 High Street, Tenby
SA70 7HD
Tel: 01834 842285,

Dales Records can be found in the Welsh resort of Tenby. In the summer, you will find the owner, Laurie Dale, sitting outside his shop exchanging banter with locals and holidaymakers while encouraging them to come in and browse. Laurie and manager Richie Westmacott are both well known in the area: Laurie as a singer and actor, while Richie is a guitarist in premier Welsh Blues band Elephant Gerald. Dales takes great pride in having many customers who first visited the store as 1960's teenagers and now frequent the store with their children and grandchildren!

The shop has two claims to fame. At 86 Laurie is rumoured to be the oldest record shop owner still working full time. The shops famous ceiling is Tenby's answer to the Sistine Chapel.



Former founding bass player of
The Rolling Stones is back with
his first UK solo album in 33 years.

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LAU
THE BELL THAT NEVER RANG

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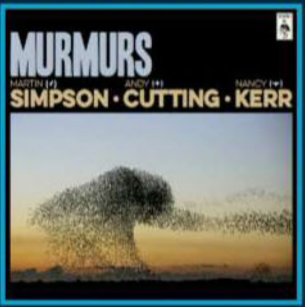

Three masters of their crafts, Martin Simpson, Andy Cutting and Nancy Kerr (the newly crowned BBC Folk Singer of the Year) are a trio made in folk heaven. These are songs that communicate to the listener a sense of bonded musicianship, a real feeling and empathy for each others' playing and a collective love and innate understanding of the music.
Released 8th June
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The American dream

In revamped form, the Stones' love letter to the US never sounded more inspired. **Mark Blake** kicks off his shoes and gets wild.

The Rolling Stones

★★★★★

Sticky Fingers

POLYDOR. CD+DVD/DL/ LP

The Super Deluxe Box Set Edition of this *Sticky Fingers* reissue includes footage from a Rolling Stones gig at London's Marquee on March 26, 1971. According to folklore, that was the night Keith Richards swung his guitar at club owner Harold Pendleton's head. Legend has it that he also bowled up to the venue two hours late, dumped his Bentley on a double yellow line and swaggered into the Marquee barefoot. Although close inspection of photographs from the night suggests that someone lent Keith a pair of shoes before showtime.

Whether it really happened like that doesn't matter. Not now, with the Stones celebrating their mythology on a 50th anniversary tour that began in 2013, and shows no sign of reaching its final destination. Now, though, after the revamped *Exile On Main St.* and *Some Girls*, a revamped *Sticky Fingers* begs the question: what took them so long?

Never again would The Rolling Stones sound quite so inspired – so raw yet slick, so tight but loose – as they did here. Metaphorically speaking, even after 44 years, *Sticky Fingers* still has its shoes off, its Bentley on a double yellow line, its guitar swinging at your head.

First, the bad news: this special edition doesn't include any previously unreleased songs. Instead, there are alternative studio takes – the best is Brown Sugar with Eric Clapton on swooping slide guitar – and live cuts, including a fiery Live With Me that reiterates why lead guitarist Mick Taylor was the best thing that ever happened to the band.

However, another thought emerges after hearing Mick Jagger imploring his 15-year-old female admirer to "scratch mah baaack" during a particularly gnarly live version of Stray Cat Blues. And it's this: that for all their nihilism and unsentimentality, The Rolling Stones always went gooey-eyed for the USA; never more so than here.

The 10 original songs on *Sticky Fingers* sound like a love letter to the USA. Whether it's Jagger's mannered hillbilly drawl on Dead Flowers or his testifying soul-man shtick on I Got The Blues, *Sticky Fingers* is the sound of English ration-book kids serenading a mythical America of "rose pink Cadillacs", "scarred old slavers" and "Cajun queens".

It's hardly surprising, then, that the album was partly conceived in the US; in December '69, at Alabama's Muscle Shoals Sound Studios. The voodoo spirit made it back to England, and was still potent when the Stones continued recording at west London's less mystical Olympic Studios and Jagger's country retreat, Stargroves.

Now, thanks to modern technology, Charlie Watts' rifle-shot snare and Jagger's rattling Spanish castanets on Brown Sugar sound sharper than ever. But the Stones' salty tale of plantation owner/slave girl coupling marks the beginning of a hot streak that, unusually for the Stones, lasts until the end of the album. The blues-rocker Sway remains the ungainly beast it always was; full of brute riffing and unresolved tension. But the mood switches for Wild Horses, the Stones' best ballad bar none, and supposedly inspired by Jagger's then girlfriend Marianne Faithfull's near fatal drugs overdose.

It's a rare flicker of humanity on an album short on humanity. As *Sticky Fingers* unwinds, its autobiographical nature becomes glaringly obvious. This is the Stones singing about being the Stones: OD'ing girlfriends, anonymous hotel rooms, boredom, exhaustion and the ever-present itch of sexual arousal. On Can't You Hear Me Knocking, Jagger tries to scratch that itch ("Help me baby… throw me down the keys") before one of the most sublime moments in the Stones canon occurs. At the two-minute 43 seconds mark, the band, assisted by conga player Rocky Dijon, break off into a wondrous, freestyle jam, conducted by Mick Taylor's whipsmart lead guitar.

The interplay between the Stones and their supporting cast here is unparalleled. During Bitch, a song in which Jagger makes the line "salivate like a Pavlov's dawg" sound like the most lascivious thing imaginable, Jim Dickinson's trumpet and Bobby Keys' sax chase the guitar riff around the room until they run it to ground. In fact, the closest *Sticky Fingers* comes to a slip-up is a slightly clunky take on Mississippi Fred McDowell's You Gotta Move – and that's only because there's so much good stuff elsewhere.

I Got The Blues, with its funeral march brass, is a nice soul-gospel throwback. But, after that, the sun goes down and the vampires come out. It's still strangely eerie to hear the Marianne Faithfull co-write Sister Morphine, which opens with Jagger intoning "Here I lie in my hospital bed", with his girlfriend having recently been doing just that, and Richards slipping into a similarly druggy decline. The same coldness permeates Dead Flowers, where the sound of Mick and Keith harmonising like pissed choirboys and lines such as "In my basement room with a needle and a spoon/And another girl to take my pain away" puncture an otherwise jaunty country shuffle.

Perhaps it's no wonder then that the closing Moonlight Mile sounds like some sort of valediction. As a very English-sounding string section soars and dips, Jagger wearily declares "I'm coming 'ome" – and for an oh-so-brief moment, the Stones sound like they're in need of a restorative cup of tea and a quiet night in front of the telly.

So often with The Rolling Stones, the myth can seem as big, if not bigger, than the music. *Sticky Fingers* redresses that balance. It's the sound of a band at the absolute peak of its powers. Not just a rock band, but a rock'n'roll band – and it's the roll, the groove and the barefoot swagger that makes this still one of the finest albums of all time.

KEY TRACKS

- Brown Sugar
- Wild Horses
- Bitch
- Can't You Hear Me Knocking
- Dead Flowers

"STICKY FINGERS STILL HAS ITS SHOES OFF, ITS BENTLEY ON DOUBLE YELLOW LINES, ITS GUITAR SWINGING AT YOUR HEAD."

BACK STORY: LIVE AT LEEDS

- In April, Mick Jagger was asked whether there were any unreleased tracks from the *Sticky Fingers* session. "I looked very hard, but I didn't find any," he admitted. Nevertheless, *Sticky Fingers* has now been made available in several different editions. The Original CD contains the album's 10 now remastered tracks. The Deluxe 2-CD set adds a second disc of five alternative versions of those tracks, including Wild Horses from Muscle Shoals studio, plus six songs from a London Roundhouse performance in March 1971. The Super Deluxe Box Set Edition also throws in *Get Yer Leeds Lungs Out*, a 13-song, '71 performance from Leeds University, a DVD from London's Marquee of two tracks, plus a 120-page hardback with an essay by Stones familiar/MOJO contributor Nick Kent.

Eyevine, Joe Sia ©Bill Graham Archives

WATTS TALKS! CHARLIE ON NICKY HOPKINS, ANDY WARHOL, RUNNING ORDERS & MORE…

Yankee foxtrot: Mick Jagger in his sticky-fingered pomp.

Leaning towers: the trousered Rolling Stones, 1971 (from left) Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, Mick Jagger, Bill Wyman and Mick Taylor; (below) Charlie today.

"I gotta have that!"

Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts speaks to Mark Paytress.

There was a lot riding on *Sticky Fingers* – new decade, new label, new financial footing, new logo and identity, new guitarist. Do you recall the band stepping up for this one?

"I've got no idea. Look (*picks up tracklisting*), I gotta have that! I can't remember what's on it. Mick Taylor was very important. He's the stand-out player. I mean, his playing on Can't You Hear Me Knocking and Moonlight Mile… But, a new sense of purpose? Not really."

You recorded at Muscle Shoals during the 1969 American tour. How did that experience shape the album?

"I don't know if the sessions started there. Our records are difficult to do that with. There's a spillover from 10 years ago, there's two from next Wednesday that we haven't done yet. It's all a bit mixed up. *Exile On Main St.* was like that. It wasn't all done at Nellcôte. What did we do at Muscle Shoals? Brown Sugar, Wild Horses…"

You Gotta Move.

"Did we do that there? Wonderful!"

The album seems immersed in the *experience* of the States, a love letter of sorts…

"Not really. We used to work at RCA in Los Angeles, Chess…"

I mean the mythology, the South, the road.

"Well, it was great to be in a room about this size [c.20 feet x 20 feet] where all these great R&B artists played, and [Muscle Shoals' studio drummer] Roger Hawkins. I sat in his place, high up there on a ledge. It was a very odd studio, actually, with an odd placing of instruments, which worked great. Yeah, of course that rubs off."

Peter Webb

Do you remember the trouserless photo session?

"No, I don't. But I remember Andy [Warhol] with the cover which is very clever. He was wonderful to work with – very commercial and understood it so well. Usually, artists get very protective of being 'artists', but Andy was different. He came up through advertising, so he knew you had to have 'Rolling Stones' on the cover. And he found the best way to put it on there."

What does *Sticky Fingers* represent now?

"I've got no idea."

It's a huge, voluminous box set. It has to be important in the Stones' scheme of things.

"Yeah, because we don't have many records out now. None of them sell. Records don't sell now like they did."

The album opened with Brown Sugar, the first single ever to be included on a Stones album. That says something in terms of making a statement…

"Mick used to do that [choose the 45], though he was never that good at it! I don't know if it was a new initiative. The running order was very important. Mick and probably Jimmy Miller and Glyn Johns would have sat for hours doing it. I don't like it when they mess with the running order for CD – all those extended plays and extra tracks on Miles Davis's classic albums, it can ruin the listening pleasure."

So what do you think of the bonus tracks on this set?

"I think they were just done as fun at the time. If they're any good or not, I don't know."

Do you remember recording that much-bootlegged version of Brown Sugar with Eric Clapton on slide?

"We cut that again because Mick never thought it was good enough."

Seeing Nicky Hopkins' name in the credits was always a good sign…

"We haven't got Nicky or Bobby [Keys] any more. I knew Nicky when he played piano in Screaming Lord Sutch's band, before he joined Cyril Davies. He was the first person I ever heard playing Otis Spann-type piano. He was fabulous and, like Eric Clapton and Mick Taylor, a very pretty player. If anything needed a melody line, he was lovely."

How important to the Stones was producer Jimmy Miller?

"He was great. Jimmy was very important for me personally. He was a percussionist himself so he used to come out and bang something to get it going. He was also good at helping Mick arrange songs, lopping bits off here and there. Years later, it got a bit difficult for him."

You're playing much of *Sticky Fingers* live on tour soon. Has preparing for that given you a perspective on it?

"No, only that they have become all one thing to me. I mean, Sister Morphine is very much of that album, but the rest we do so it's a difficult one to have stand-out tracks."

Brother beyond

Three CDs from the late Bee Gee's manic 12-month period of creation between 1969-1970. By Andrew Male.

Robin Gibb

★★★★★

Saved By The Bell

REPRISE. CD

Saved By The Bell

"THERE ARE albums you don't even remember making," says Robin Gibb. "Maybe that's a good thing." We're in a dark corner of Soho's Union Club in the winter of 2002 and the 53-year-old Bee Gee is trying to recall the circumstances surrounding his renowned "lost" 1970 album, *Sing Slowly Sisters*.

This much he remembers: in February 1969, after a dispute with older brother Barry over the first single off conceptual double LP *Odessa*, 19-year-old Robin quit the Bee Gees. "There was a disagreement," Gibb told me. "A lot like the Gallaghers… We weren't doing concerts; we weren't showing up, we had egos. You're 19 years old, in an adult world, [and] you just wake up one morning and say, Nah, I don't want to do a show tonight. I want go in the studio and record this great opera."

So that's what he did. At the height of the brothers' first wave of fame, Robin settled into his Knightsbridge pile and started composing some of the strangest music of the late '60s.

When his first single, Saved By The Bell, was released in June 1969, just four months after the split, Gibb claimed to have already written 100 songs. Topping charts throughout Europe, …Bell was a peculiar smash hit, a traumatised Gibb, unmoored by Binson Echorec delays, "[walking] down heartbreak lane", mocked by Kenny Clayton's dancing strings and the tea tray tempos of an FR1 Rhythm Ace drum machine.

The trauma was all too real. On November 5, 1967, Gibb, then aged 17, and his fiancée Molly Hullis were involved in the Hither Green rail crash, in which 49 people died. Although the singer never wrote directly about the crash, it undeniably informed his solo work, as did his use of amphetamines. "We were very good as far as drugs were concerned," he told me. "But speed stuff, yeah. It just made you work, work, work."

Recorded at IBC Studios in August 1969, the first full-length result of Gibb's energised isolationism was *Robin's Reign*, his hauntingly spare Rhythm Ace-and-keyboard demos about work, loss, hardship, and death borne aloft by Clayton's baroque strings'n'brass arrangements. Unfortunately, public interest did not keep up with Gibb's work schedule. Subsequent singles fared poorly, as did rival releases from Barry and Maurice. By August 1970, when the Bee Gees finally reunited, Robin had recorded and abandoned over a double album's worth of solo material.

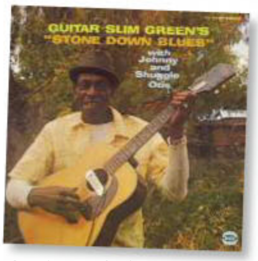
Down the years the reputation of these recordings grew. Dodgy bootlegs surfaced, sounding warped, variegated and grand. In 2005, with Robin Gibb's blessing, Grammy-nominated producer Andrew Sandoval began accumulating original tapes and acetates via superfans, auction sites, and the black market. What he has finally assembled is astonishing. *Robin's Reign* now comes with alternate takes, demos and a 12-minute version of LP track Farmer Ferdinand Hudson that unfurls like some forsaken Joe Meek musical adaptation of Robert Flaherty's Man Of Aran. A third CD brings together non-album rarities, Knightsbridge demos, BBC sessions and two grand mini-symphonies, Moon Anthem and Ghost Of Christmas Past.

However, the real revelation comes with *Sing Slowly Sisters*. From the opening title track, a funereal dispatch from a doomed First World War soldier, to the final unsettling acoustic demo Why Not Cry Together, *SSS* is a dark-bloomed collection of singular British chanson that owes as much to Victorian parlour music as to Eleanor Rigby. At times, the album's arrangements recall *Scott 2*'s grandiose '60s orch-pop, but with Walker's soaring superiority replaced by the "deafening despair" of his Plastic Palace People. Prosaic and surreal, Gibb's beseeching lyrics have the quality of cries for help, of letters never sent. Great Caesar's Ghost unravels like a queasy nightmare missive from beyond the grave, while the spare 3am interiors of I've Been Hurt, Sky West And Crooked and The Flag I Flew, haunt the mind like the suicide notes of marooned Edwardians, orchestrated for sinister palm court orchestra.

The end result is one of the most remarkable solo albums of the era, and the most unlikely; a teenage millionaire writing death letters from lost suburbia. Rather than looking at all the lonely people, *Sing Slowly Sisters* captured their voice. Pop stardom has never sounded lonelier.

Paying the toll: when Robin Gibb reigned alone.

Alamy



Guitar Slim Green With Johnny And Shuggie Otis

★★★

Stone Down Blues

BGP. CD/LP

Texas-born bluesman's 1970 sole album originally issued on Kent.

Guitar Slim Green may be the cover star here, but the reason this largely forgotten blues album gets a reissue is because of its featured guitarist, Shuggie Otis, now a cult hero. Otis's hypnotic groove successfully brings proto-funk to a boogie blues setting on the opener Shake 'Em Up, a vocal reworking of Green's 1958 instrumental. The latter's street sing-talk is lascivious, loose, intoxicating – drums are provided by Shuggie's father Johnny Otis, who also produces. The remainder of the album is more typical Chicago-styled blues, solid rather than innovative, although protest song This War Ain't Right, scribed by Johnny, introduces a social conscience. Elsewhere, Shuggie wails harmonica *à la* Little Walter on Bumble Bee Blues; Make Love All Night, meanwhile, recalls a good Muddy Waters shuffle.

Lois Wilson

Idris Muhammad

★★★★

Turn This Mutha Out

SOUL BROTHER. CD/LP.

Forgotten jazz-funk relic from '77 gains CD debut.

Born Leo Morris, this versatile New Orleans drummer cut his musical teeth as a teenager playing on Fats Domino's Blueberry Hill in the 1950s before reinventing himself as a jazz sticksman the following decade. Converting to Islam in 1969, Muhammad became house drummer at the Prestige label before landing at producer Creed Taylor's soul-jazz-oriented Kudu imprint in '74. *Turn This Mutha Out* was Muhammad's third outing for Kudu, masterminded and largely written by ace NYC arranger/producer Dave Matthews, who worked with James Brown during the same timeframe. The euphoric Could Heaven Ever Be Like This perfectly encapsulates the union of dance music with jazz-funk aesthetics. In acute contrast, the sweetly serene Moon Hymn, with its muted dynamics, provides a brief respite of stasis and tranquility from the album's relentless surge of driving mirrorball funk.

Charles Waring

Various

★★★★

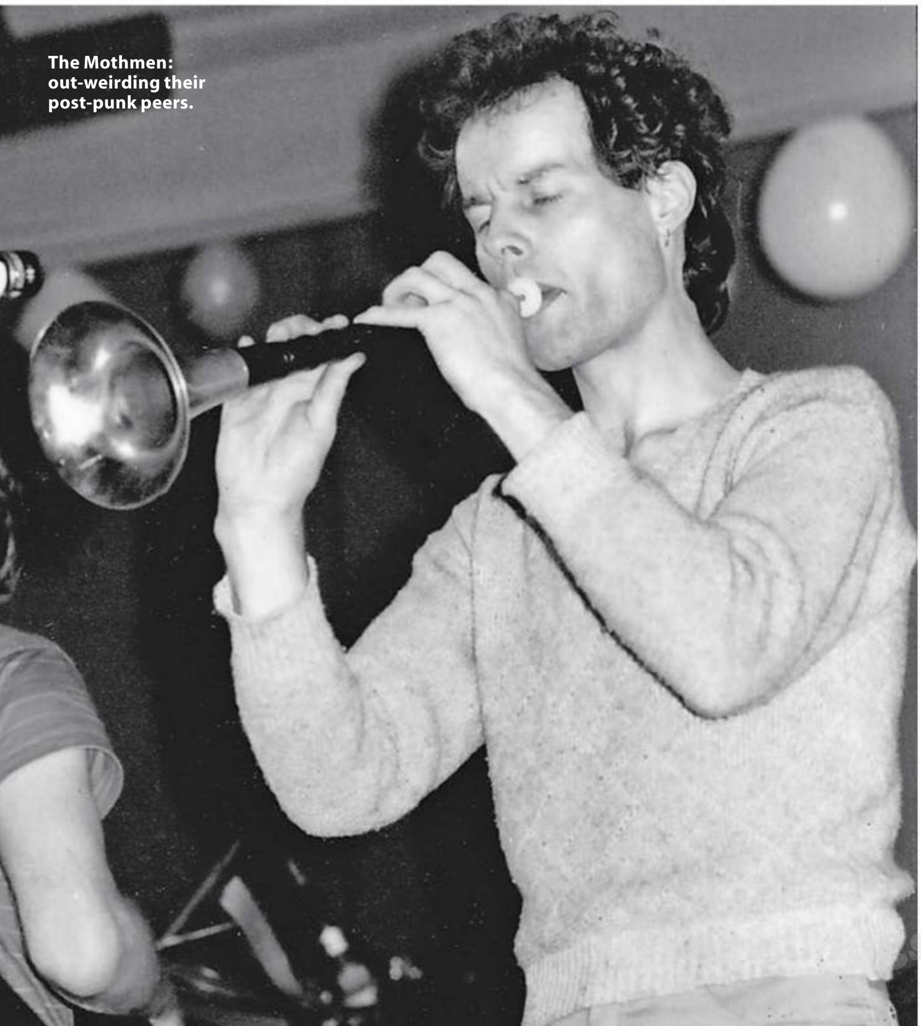
20 Years Of Henry Street Music: The Definitive Collection

BBE. CD/DL/LP

Five-volume anthology of New York house label's sumptuous disco cut-ups.

Henry Street became a safe haven for the illicit marriage of classic disco and thumping four-to-the-floor house. Founded by Brooklynite Johnny De Mairo in 1993, the DJ and industry mover known as The Shark corralled contacts from his promotion company Street Information Network to get the ball rolling, with Kenny Dope's The Bucketheads leading the charge. The ploy took flight with fourth single The Bomb (These Sounds Fall Into My Mind), as Dope dropped the vocals from Chicago's Street Player and resequenced it into something invigorating and wholly new. This exhaustive label summation underlines their rare staying power, crossover smashes by Armand Van Helden and Todd Terry mingling with more esoteric fare from DJ Duke, The Rising Sunz and De Mairo's own Johnick venture.

Andy Cowan



The Mothmen: out-weirding their post-punk peers.

Bad Company

★★★★

Bad Company

RHINO. CD/LP

1970's rock supergroup's classic debut: now in deluxe editions, with outtakes, etc.

In September 1974, when Bad Company's first album topped the US chart, its success seemed preordained. The four band members were established big hitters: singer Paul Rodgers and drummer Simon Kirke had starred in Free, guitarist Mick Ralphs in Mott The Hoople, bassist Boz Burrell in King Crimson. Moreover, in Peter Grant, Bad Co shared a manager with Led Zeppelin, and this album was also the flagship release for Zep's vanity label Swan Song. The new group's style was an extension of Free's soulful hard rock, evident in the heavy swing of Ralphs' Can't Get Enough, the simple beauty of Rodgers/Ralphs' acoustic number Seagull, and the melancholy outlaw blues of the signature song Bad Company: all of them lit up by Rodgers' richly expressive voice. Also reissued is the band's second album *Straight Shooter* from 1975, which was another doozy. But for Bad Co, the first cut was the deepest.

Paul Elliott

The Mothmen

★★★★

Pay Attention!

ON U SOUND. CD/DL/LP

Wonderful and frightening psych-tinged post-punk by former Durutti Column men.

The Mothmen managed to out-weird their '80s post-punk peers. Assembled from the remnants of arch Manchester parodists Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias and Durutti Column, their long lost 1980 debut abandoned new wave's linear structures for heavy dub, reverb-drenched drums, scratchy guitars and skronking sax. Shuddering opener Afghan Farmer Driving Cattle, the nervy Pere Ubu angst of Animal Animaux and the genuine 'industrial' racket of Factory/Teapoint/Factory, replete with simulated canteen noises, sound almost conventional stacked against the beastly 20-minute Mothman: a blood-pumping, tribal three-note mind-fuck worthy of labelmates African Head Charge, improbably driven by the rhythm section that powered late-'80s Simply Red. Only the second album on On-U-Sound, this generously appended reissue includes label boss Adrian Sherwood's stunning stripped-back remix Afghani Dub.

Andy Cowan

Various

★★★★

The Midlands Roots Explosion Volume One

REGGAE ARCHIVE. CD/DL/LP

Roots reggae treasures from Brum and beyond.

THE MIDLANDS ROOTS EXPLOSION

Turning their attention to the Black Country, Reggae Archive Records have unearthed some real gems on their latest comp, a delightful volume of over-looked and previously unreleased roots reggae, produced in the Midlands in the late '70s and early '80s. It's a real voyage of discovery. For instance, on Steel Pulse's super-raw 1976 debut single, the Afrocentric Kibudu-Mansatta-Abuku, the vocal arrangement is totally unlike those of future works. Musical Youth's Political is equally shocking in its rollicking defence of the working classes, and Wolverhampton's Capital Letters sing of devotion to Jah on I Will Never. The lesser-known Black Symbol and related acts like Oneness, Man From The Hills and Sceptre sound equally hard, as does Benjamin Zephaniah's Unite Handsworth.

David Katz

THE COMPLETE TONY BENNETT BILL EVANS RECORDINGS

Tony Bennett And Bill Evans

★★★★

The Complete Tony Bennett/Bill Evans Recordings

FANTASY. LP

Classic vocal jazz recordings, once more on vinyl.

Some 40 years ago, Annie Ross suggested that Tony Bennett should record with the highly influential jazz pianist, Bill Evans. The result was two fine albums plus, in this instance, numerous alternate takes and bonus tracks of value. Not that is was just a case of a singer being accompanied by a keyboardist. They produced a partnership in which Evans contributed as much, or even more, towards its success. The song choice throughout is immaculate and it's a privilege to hear the duo exploring the delights of such as Bernstein-Comden-Green's Some Other Time, Evans' own delightful Waltz For Debby and a version of Bergman-Demy-LeGrand's You Must Believe In Spring tenderly delivered by Bennett.

Fred Dellar

Ali Farka Touré With Ry Cooder

★★★★

Talking Timbuktu

WORLD CIRCUIT. LP

Out on vinyl with bonus alternative take of what was a commercial and artistic breakthrough for Touré.

There was more than a clash of continents when the Malian guitarist arrived in Los Angeles in 1993 to record with an American he had long admired: Touré was immediately spooked by the studio. As a child, he had been possessed by the djinn (spirits) of the Niger and could sense something in the vibes at Ocean Way – the proximity of the sea meant playing his one-string fiddle could have resulted in a flood of biblical proportions. Cooder and some crack accomplices (including Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown and Jim Keltner) put Touré at his ease by letting him play his own thing and fitting in around him without swamping him in American funk – there's lovely surf-style slide on Gomni and some of the playing on Lasidan sounds not like the Cuban tres that would be integral Cooder's next world music project, *Buena Vista Social Club*.

David Hutcheon

Various

★★★★

Nick Cave Heard Them Here First

ACE. CD

From Blind Willie Johnson to Disco 2000: original versions of 22 songs covered by the Bard of Warracknabeal.

NICK CAVE
HEARD THEM HERE FIRST

It isn't a new concept: Australia's Rubber label has released two volumes of *Original Seeds*, compilations of "songs that inspired Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds". But credit to Ace for narrowing the criteria to songs that Cave has actually covered and officially released, either solo, with The Bad Seeds or The Birthday Party, or as a duet. That still leaves at least 60 to choose from, and although licensing issues were doubtless a factor, it's no mean feat to distil the scope of the man's immersion in song onto one 80-minute disc. This set functions primarily as an enjoyable mix of contrasting styles and voices – The Stooges; Alex Harvey; Pulp; Nina Simone; Gene Pitney; Johnny Cash; Serge Gainsbourg; John Lee Hooker; Leonard Cohen; Bob Dylan – but also in providing context for Cave's passionate commitment to writing and performances which cut deep to the emotional core, regardless of genre.

Keith Cameron

Audience THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

Audience

★★★

The House On The Hill

ESOTERIC. CD/DL

Charisma label dark horses at their 1971 peak. Their '73 swansong *Lunch* also remastered/expanded.

Vocalist Howard Werth asserted that Audience were more in thrall to Americana than the UK progressive scene in which they were grouped. True, I Had A Dream is pure *Music From Big Pink* wish-fulfilment and the quartet tapped blues more than, say, Yes. But check the Hipgnosis sleeve and twisting seven-minute tracts. A carousing title-track has four distinct sections, and given Werth's wavering snarl and Keith Gemmell's mellifluous flute, it's a dead ringer for Jethro Tull. Like labelmates Van Der Graaf Generator, Gemmell's sax was the lead rather than guitar, except the nylon string reverie Raviole with orchestration by Nick Drake arranger Robert Kirby – case closed. Actually, where Audience belonged in 1971 was alongside the likes of Elton John – they shared a producer in Gus Dudgeon – forging a new Anglo-American adventure, though sadly Audience lacked Elton's supreme songwriting nous.

Martin Aston

Various

★★★★

NuYorica! Culture Clash In New York City: Experiments In Latin Music 1970-77

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Exemplary New York Latino compilation, now expanded and remastered.

New York's Latin jazz scene has always been a complex beast. With Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Afro-Cubans and musicians from all manner of other ethnic groups rubbing shoulders in El Barrio and Harlem, the resultant hybrids offered relentless pressure to purist boundaries. Twenty years ago, Soul Jazz celebrated the multifaceted music with the acclaimed *NuYorica!* compilation, and for its anniversary edition, they've pulled out all the stops, remastering the set for improved sound quality, shifting the tracklisting in place and slightly expanding the head count. The range of material featured is mightily impressive, so in addition to established salsa heavyweights like Eddie Palmieri, Cachao, Machito's Orchestra, and Afro-Filipino funkster Joe Bataan, there are obscure delights from the likes of Stone Alliance, Ricardo Marrero, Ocho and Tempo 70. A great listen from start to finish, propelled by frequent genre-hopping.

David Katz

VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

未来の後にようこそ
WELCOME TO THE AFTERFUTURE
MIKE LADD

Mike Ladd

Welcome To The Afterfuture

VAVA

It is the year 2000 and the New York MC, poet, professor and producer Mike Ladd follows his satirical science-fiction project The Infesticons with this album of sprawling, ambitious and personal futurist fables. Opening with the post-millennial comedown of 5000 Miles West Of The Future, Ladd musing drily over throbbing space-funk, "Where's my floating car, my utopia?" From here, he spins off in myriad directions, juggling globalism, imperialism and police brutality on Airwave Hysteria. Feb 4 '99 (For All Those Killed By Cops), a treatise on the shooting of Amadou Diallo that is by turns surreal, spiritual, raging and heart-broken, closes Ladd's masterpiece, its message of tragedy and injustice having scarcely dated in the intervening years. This anniversary, double vinyl long-player edition comes in a gatefold sleeve packaged with a booklet featuring exclusive pictures, lyrics, essays and Ladd's own Afterfuture Manifesto. *SC*

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY'S
BIG MAN

Cannonball Adderley

★★★

Big Man

REAL GONE. CD/DL

Jazz saxophone legend's parting shot.

Adderley spent the last four years of his life toiling to bring this hugely ambitious 'folk musical' (as he dubbed it) into being, and completed it just before his premature death from a stroke at the age of 46 in 1975. First released as a double LP on Fantasy that year, this largely forgotten work is reissued for the first time ever and proves to be an intriguing but flawed affair that is not quite the memorable magnum opus its creator hoped for. Depicting the life of African-American folk hero John Henry, it features noted actor Robert Guillaume alongside veteran blues shouter Joe Williams and an impressive young Randy Crawford (making her recording debut). But with negligible jazz content (blues, gospel and funk predominate) it's an oddball, if laudable, curio in Cannonball's canon.

Charles Waring

Black Mountain

★★★★

Black Mountain

JAGJAGUWAR. CD/DL/LP

Canadian heads' 2005 debut, now with bonus cuts.

Some eponymous debuts, like *Ramones* or *The Clash*, justify their title's definitive claims. So too *Black Mountain*, an outsider-rock classicist's wet dream whose opening track came with its own edict: "Oh we can't stand all your modern music…" Yet this skronking sweep of Glimmer Twins pop, doom riffola and red-eyed wyrd-folk vocalese prevailed by honouring youthful instinct over mere facsimile recreation of history. Expansive psych jams played with a minimalist imperative, the harmony of its original construct is amplified by this 2-CD edition's extras: the nine-minute Druganaut is stoned immaculate, Bicycle Man's Stooges cops are cute, and the Set Us Free demo underlines the centrality of Amber Webber's tremulous sobs to BM's ragged glory. That subsequent records have yet to emulate its jolt proves *Black Mountain*'s peak status.

Keith Cameron

BLACK MOUNTAIN

Black Mountain: heads, they win.

Toby Bannister

FILEUNDER

Teenage fang club

A neglected hard rock band reappraised.

By Phil Alexander.

Spooky Tooth circa 1968, with Mike Harrison (top right) and Gary Wright (bottom right).

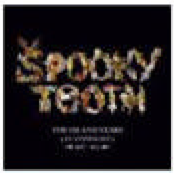
In the spring of 1968 Island Records corralled their hottest rock artists into Hyde Park for a group photo that would appear on the cover of their LP sampler, *You Can All Join In*. Free, Jethro Tull, and Traffic cosied up to John Martyn and Fairport Convention, and while Spooky Tooth were represented by co-vocalists Gary Wright and Mike Harrison, the rest of the band missed the shoot by dallying at bassist Greg Ridley's flat. In many ways, this missed opportunity typifies the story of Spooky Tooth: a band who, during their seven years at the label, remained one step away from the success enjoyed by their peers. Though, as *The Island Years: An Anthology 1967-1974* (★★★★) amply proves, the music was rarely the issue.

Like many of their Island labelmates, Spooky Tooth grew out of the British R&B club scene and retained their soulful edge as they morphed from the Carlisle-based VIPs into psychedelic outfit Art. The latter lasted around six months, cutting the promising *Supernatural Fairy Tales* album in '67. Despite that debut's impressive jam-led freak-outs, label boss/manager Chris Blackwell felt they needed a proper songwriter and introduced New Yorker Wright to the line-up of guitarist Luther Grosvenor, drummer Mike Kellie, Ridley and Harrison. Wright renamed the band Spooky Tooth, helping to crystallise their sound on 1968's *It's All About* as he and Harrison formed a unique double keyboard-and-vocal frontline.

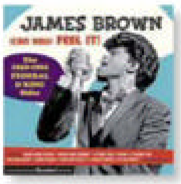
1969's *Spooky Two* proved to be the band's high watermark, the album matching hard rock smarts (typified by Better By You, Better Than Me, later covered by Judas Priest) with moments of pastoral soul (as on the neo-gospel of I've Got Enough Heartaches). Curiously, rather than building on their success, Blackwell cajoled the band into collaborating with French *musique concrète* composer Pierre Henry. The resulting experimental LP, *Ceremony: An Electronic Mass*, alienated both fans and the band, leading to Wright's departure.

Their principal songwriter's exit resulted in 1970's cover-laden *The Last Puff* (including a grungy opening stab at I Am The Walrus) that failed to restore their fortunes. Wright returned for the next three LPs – *You Broke My Heart… So I Busted Your Jaw* (1973), *Witness* (also '73) and *The Mirror* (1974, Harrison replaced by Mike Patto) – bringing guitarist Mick Jones into the fold. If their sound hardened further, Spooky Tooth's lithe groove also remained intact, albeit under-appreciated.

Calling time in '74, Wright and Harrison embarked on solo careers, Kellie went on to form The Only Ones, Jones assembled Foreigner, while Ridley and Grosvenor had long departed for Humble Pie and Mott The Hoople respectively. Time, however, has been kind to Spooky Tooth; this nine-disc collection boasts music full of heart and soul, genuinely worthy of rich reappraisal.



> "SPOOKY TOOTH'S LITHE GROOVE REMAINED INTACT, ALBEIT UNDER-APPRECIATED."



James Brown

★★★★

(Can You) Feel It!

HOODOO. CD

His 1959-62 King/Federal A- and B-sides, 50 tracks on 2-CDs that span I Want You So Bad to Prisoner Of Love. So, boasts I'll Go Crazy, Think, I Don't Mind, and band features like Mashed Potatoes and Suds. Brilliant! *GB*

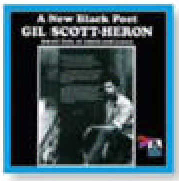
Evil Acidhead

★★★

In The Name Of All That Is Unholy

AGITATED. CD/LP

Monster Magnet's John McBain recorded this 77-minute acid jam to cassette in the late '80s. If fractious noise and intense static are your thing, you can now own it in analogue on 2-LPs. *JB*



Gil Scott-Heron

★★★★

Small Talk At 125th And Lenox

BGP. CD/DL

1971 debut, mostly spoken word, hinting at future soul-rap fusion. Though marred by homophobic The Subject Was Faggots, the power of Heron's political critiques (Whitey On The Moon) is still startling. *KC*

REVOLUTION!

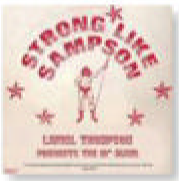
Paul Revere & The Raiders

★★★

Revolution!

CHERRY RED. CD

After a 1967 shake-up, Mark Lindsay cut this harmonious blues pop with sessioneers: Ry Cooder, Glen Campbell, James Burton; curiously evocative of the Minder theme. *PS*



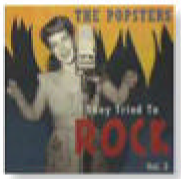
Various

★★★★

Strong Like Sampson

HOT MILK. CD

Produced by Linval Thompson, these '79/80 roots-dancehall-dub 12-inch versions are basshead joy. Features Sammy Dread and Papa Tullo's weed-vs-booze hymnal I'm A Dread Locks. And who knew Linval's real name was Leval? *IH*



Various

★★★

They Tried To Rock Vol. 3

BEAR FAMILY. CD

Many '50s MOR faves added R&B to their output. For such as Kay Starr and Peggy Lee it worked, but not so for Frank Sinatra, hung out to dry on a cover of The Charms' Two Hearts, Two Kisses. *FD*

WOW, WOW, BABY!

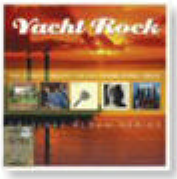
Various

★★★★

Wow, Wow, Baby!

ACE. CD/DL

Fantastic third all-specialist haul from labels run by ill-fated LA record hustler John Dolphin: R&B, gospel, doo wop and blues steeped in guts and gravy. Floyd Dixon, Jimmy Witherspoon and Brother Prince Dixon excel. *IH*



Various

★★

Yacht Rock

RHINO. CD

The smoothest '70s rock sounds can be hypnotising, but is this grab bag – *Bread* from 1970, the adult contemporary of *Chicago 16* from 1982, Hall & Oates' *Abandoned Luncheonette* – the best way to access it? *IH*

Simon Parfrement

The Fame Gang

★★★

Grits & Gravy

BGP. CD

The third Fame Gang, formed in '69 after Hood, Hawkins et al quit Rick Hall's studio, on a *Best Of*'s 25 mostly funky workouts. Try organ-led Shoalin' or horn-led Turn My Chicken Loose as they keep the Fame burning in M.G.'s-to-Mar-Keys styles. *GB*

James

★★★

Laid/Wah Wah

MERCURY. CD/LP

Not quite reunited in the ambient manner you suspect Brian Eno dreamed of: the best-selling and "jamming" albums he produced concurrently for Tim Booth et al, boxed as vinyl, booklets, outtakes and more. *PS*

Grace Jones

★★★

Disco

ISLAND/UMC. CD/DL/LP

Lustrous box set of her first three albums (plus extras) produced by tape-slicing innovator Tom Moulton. From the lip-glossy show-tunes of her debut to the curious disco-gospel concept suite on her final Island album in 1979. *JB*

Stephen Dale Petit

★★★

At High Voltage

333. CD/DL

Recorded on the Ronnie Lane Mobile at the 2010 High Voltage festival, blues hooligan SDP's vinyl-only release is now more widely available. A louder record you won't hear this year. *PA*

Elvis Presley

★★★★★

Elvis Is Back/A Date With Elvis

DREAM COVERS. CD

A lovely digi-pack twofer with the top-drawer 1959 Sun cupboard clear-out, *A Date With Elvis*, and 1960's post-army return. Ghostly, romantic, ambrosial and odd, it might be the king's best overall LP. *AM*

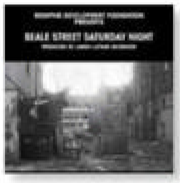
The Smoke

★★★

My Friend Jack Eats Sugar Lumps: An Anthology

MORGAN MUSIC CO. CD

The definitive three-disc set of Yorkshire psych outfit celebrates the '60s glory daze. 'Fun' '70s career fag-ends are included for completists. *PA*



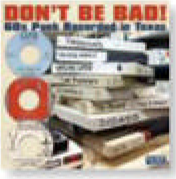
Various

★★★

Beale Street Saturday Night

OMNIVORE. CD/LP

Jim Dickinson's frayed 1978 farewell to the Memphis musical hub, as the avenue underwent "urban renewal". Half-cut blues legends sit in on tracks Tav Falco might dismiss as "too raw and messy". *AM*



Various

★★★

Don't Be Bad!

BIG BEAT. CD

The uptight Vox-driven sound of mid-'60s Texan garage, as produced by 'Crazy Cajun' huckster Huey Meaux. Gems amid the 26 tracks of gauche fake Brit-beat: The People's debonair Again; Gaylan Ladd's bracing Her Loving Way. *KC*

Various

★★★★

Step Inside My Soul

CREE. CD/DL/LP

Even signing James Brown did not make Polydor black music-savvy. Here are 18 under-promoted '70s acts, most – Mojoba's sweet soul; Vaneese & Carolyn (V is Rufus Thomas's eldest); Moorish Vanguard, very funky – deserved better. *GB*

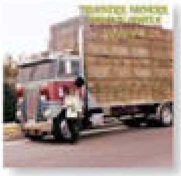
Various/Burt Bacharach

★★★

The Story Of My Life

HOODOO. CD

Some swinging gems amongst these 60-tracks of Bacharach's '55-62 work, including offerings from the likes of Sophia Loren, Bobby Vee and several lesser-known Dionne Warwick recordings. *PS*



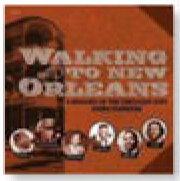
Various

★★★★

Truckers, Kickers, Cowboy Angels Vol. 4

BEAR FAMILY. CD

A double helping of country-rock, circa 1971. Ry Cooder, Commander Cody, The Band, John Prine, J.J. Cale, Michael Nesmith, Cochise and Head, Hands And Feet are among those on this dud-free set. *FD*



Various

★★★★

Walking To New Orleans

PROPER. CD

Rollicking 4-CD set traces the contributions of the Crescent City's finest piano players. From Callie Vassar's 1923 Original Stomps to Eddie Bo's Check Mr Popeye, it's a joyous 100-track history lesson. *PA*

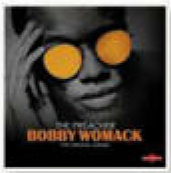
Tony Joe White

★★★★

Swamp Fox

SALVO/RHINO. CD

2-CD collection profiling the best of the Louisiana swamp groover's output between 1968 and 1963. All the classics (Polk Salad Annie, Rainy Night In Georgia) are here along with his more lonesome laidback album tracks. *AM*



Bobby Womack

★★★★★

The Preacher

CHARLY. CD

Box of five 1968-72 LPs as BW claws back into favour after he married Sam Cooke's widow. The picks, *Understanding* and *Communication*; *Fly Me To The Moon* has his best covers; *My Prescription* is covers/originals; *The Womack Live* is a sizzler. *GB*

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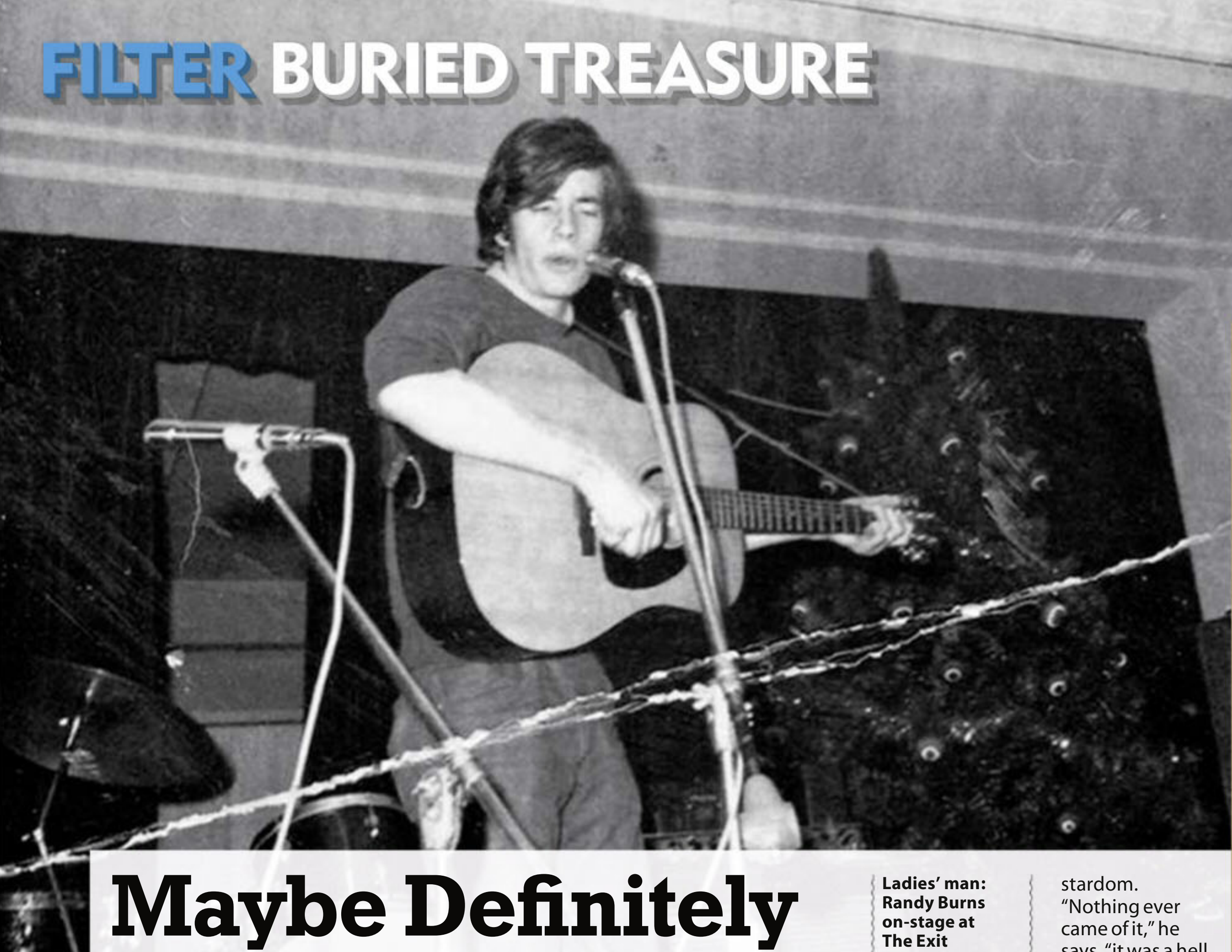
COMING NEXT MONTH

St. Vincent, Richard Thompson, Ricky Lee Jones, Chemical Brothers, Heather Woods Broderick, Omar Souleyman, Michael Head, Sleaford Mods and more…

Crash money: a new Sleaford Mods state of the nation address is nigh.



Ladies' man: Randy Burns on-stage at The Exit Coffeehouse, New Haven, Connecticut, late '60s; (below) Randy exudes quietly stoned charm.

Sherry Stow Ryan, courtesy of Steve Holtje/ESP-Disk

Maybe Definitely

Knocking faintly for rescue from rock obscuria's abandoned mineshaft: dreamy, whispered psych-folk, for the tripped out.

Randy Burns

Songs For An Uncertain Lady

ESP-DISK, 1970

Randy Burns led two lives in the late '60s. He was an acoustic balladeer who had left New Haven, Connecticut for the folkie mecca of Greenwich Village in 1966, when he was just 17. He quickly scored a residency at storied MacDougal Street folk spot The Gaslight and a deal with much-mythologised guerilla indie ESP-Disk (home of everyone from Sun Ra to The Fugs). The label released his debut, *Of Love And War*, that year, and the follow-up, *Evening Of The Magician*, in '68. Burns was also fronting The Morning, a regionally popular rock band of fellow New Havenites.

It was in the latter role that he ended up ensconced in Los Angeles in 1968, when The Morning came under the wing of Troubadour owner Doug Weston. He set The Morning up in a house on West Hollywood's Lemon Grove Avenue, where, Burns remembers, "The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band would come and jam and get whacked with us." Gigging regularly at the Whisky and Troubadour clubs, Burns remembers Hootenanny nights at the latter in the company of Linda Ronstadt and Jackson Browne.

While The Morning awaited stardom, Burns resumed his folk singer role, accepting an invitation from local engineer Bill Schnee (who went on to win Grammys for recording Steely Dan's *Aja* and *Gaucho*) to cut some solo tunes in his studio. Burns brought his bandmates in as backing musicians, but the sounds that started flowing bore little relation to either his Greenwich Village beginnings or The Morning's twin-guitar rock'n'roll rumble.

Instead, a free-flowing, gently trippy set of bittersweet psych-folk tunes emerged. For most of the record, Burns' voice barely rises above a whisper, with his bandmates maintaining a similarly mellow mien as the sounds subtly melt into each other to foment a hazy, hypnotic vibe. The fuzzy lo-fi feel of the sessions is part of the album's appeal.

"We just made it simple, didn't spend a hell of a lot of time on it," remembers Burns. But it's the small touches that really add an aura of spaciness to what are, for the most part, pretty conventionally structured songs.

Of *Songs For An Uncertain Lady*'s title track, Burns says, "I thought it would be neat if I'd double-track my voice and do it in a round type thing." The sound of multiple Randys liquefying into one another on the choruses makes for one of the record's most dizzying moments. The aqueous flute lines guitarist Bruce Samuels adds to that song as well as Only Time Will Make You See and Lisa lend an additional layer of headiness.

"That should space you out," agrees Burns. "If you're not when you first start listening to it, it should take you right away into space."

All these tenderly trippy touches would be for nought without Burns' heart-piercing balladry and warm, oaky baritone, as demonstrated on the piano-led, wee-hours Autumn On Your Mind and in the thinly veiled regret of Lisa.

"Apple was really interested," Burns recalls, "but they had just signed James Taylor, so they didn't want another solo skinny white guy."

By the time the singer was halfway to an album, The Morning had been gigging in LA about a year but were no closer to stardom. "Nothing ever came of it," he says, "it was a hell of a lot of fun for a while, but then it just got old. So we broke the contracts, signed with new management, and came back East." Jackson Browne jumped at the chance to home in on the woman Burns had been seeing, albeit in a gentlemanly manner. "He asked my permission," Burns explains, "because he didn't know how serious we were."

Back in New York, Burns discovered he still had a home at his old label, and in classic DIY fashion, ESP-Disk founder Bernard Stollman gave him a single evening of studio time to cut the second half of the album. "We just went in there and winged it," says Burns, "We booked it for like six hours, just laid 'em out, got a whole bunch of beer and some Jameson's and stuff like that… just did it all in one night."

The freewheeling, intoxicated atmosphere of the slapdash session spurred the album's two edgiest tunes. The churning, Tim Buckley-like Child For Now evolved spontaneously from a jam. "Andy [Merwin, guitarist] and I were just screwing around on something and I kind of liked the riffs," recalls Burns, "so I just laid out some words and we just did it." Closing cut Deegan Street, *Uncertain Lady*'s lone electric track, is an emotionally charged stomp closer to Jefferson Airplane than anything coming out of MacDougal Street.

The album sat unreleased until 1970. By that time The Morning had morphed into Randy Burns & The Sky Dog Band, who would record an album for Mercury and two for Polydor, with country rock leanings that led the LA Times to dub Burns the best thing since Gram Parsons. But the quietly stoned charm of *Songs For An Uncertain Lady* was a one-off, confined to a rarefied moment in time.

Jim Allen

"THAT SHOULD SPACE YOU OUT... IT SHOULD TAKE YOU RIGHT AWAY INTO SPACE."

Randy Burns

RANDY BURNS

CREDITS

Tracks: Sorrow's Children / Autumn On Your Mind / Song For An Uncertain Lady / If You Just Let Tomorrow Be / Only Time Will Make You See / Maybelline / Lisa / The One I Thought Was There / Child For Now / Waiting For An Old Friend / Africa / Deegan Street

Recorded: Marx Studios, LA; Nola Studio, NYC, 1968

Released: 1970

Personnel: Randy Burns (vocals, acoustic guitar), Matt Kastner (guitar, piano, celeste), Andy 'Dog' Merwin (guitar), Bruce Samuels (bass, flute, piano), John O'Leary, Bob Sheehan (drums), Bergert Roberts (cosmic tambourine, Zulu drums), A.J. Mulhern, Carolyn Marx (b vocals).

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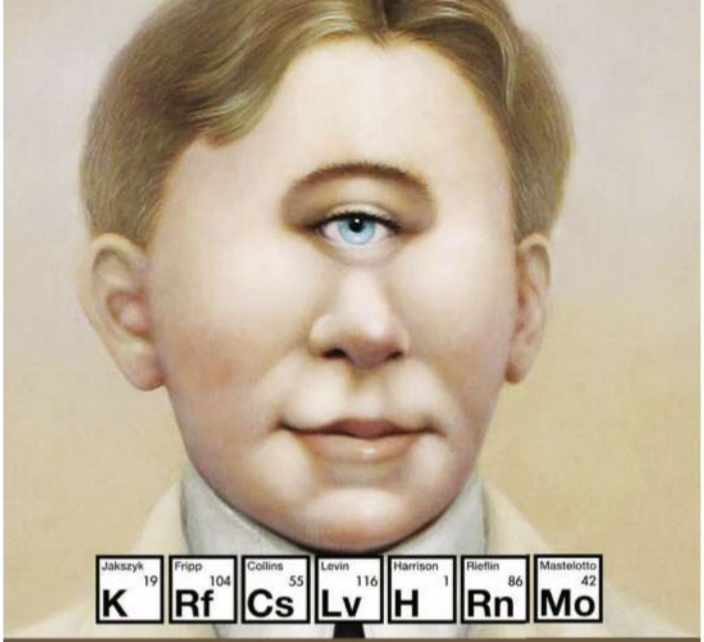

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PUT MEMORIES

'KATZENJAMMER ARE AN ENTERTAINING CURIOSITY...
THEY HAVE AN ENORMOUS SENSE OF FUN'
★★★★ THE GUARDIAN

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Still willin': Little Feat (clockwise from top left) be-hatted Lowell George, Kenny Gradney, Paul Barrère, Richie Hayward, Sam Clayton, Bill Payne; (far right) hats on to Lowell.

GEORGEBEST

Little Feat

Audacious, eclectic rock.
By Mat Snow.

Polled, back in the Old Wave '70s, who were the best rock bands in America, you'd get votes galore for '60s diehards The Band, The Beach Boys, The Byrds, Captain Beefheart, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Grateful Dead, Santana, Spirit and Sly & The Family Stone, plus relative newbies The Allman Brothers Band, Eagles and Lynyrd Skynyrd, while at each end of the record store racks Aerosmith and ZZ Top were hot contenders too.

But the truly hip knew the laurels had to be shared between two sets of sons of the Mothers Of Invention: on the East Coast, Frank Zappa's disciples in jazz, satire and scurrility, Steely Dan; on the West, a former Mother who sounded nothing like his old boss – Lowell George and his band Little Feat.

Like Toronto's Robbie Robertson, San Francisco's John Fogerty and Dartford's Mick and Keith, Hollywood brat Lowell George was besotted by the musical, mythic South. Like so many '60s white boys initially inspired by Chicago's Howlin' Wolf, Lowell's musical pilgrimage trucked down the back roads through Texas and Dixie, down into the Mississippi bayou to New Orleans. Focused by Lowell's earthy, easy-rolling, romantic vision but performing perfectionism, over the course of four fantastic albums Little Feat added spice, meat and grease to the gumbo.

But at the very moment the Stones and Led Zeppelin declared themselves fans and Feat's records started selling, with his songwriting mojo spluttering an exhausted, swelling and self-medicating Lowell took his hands off the wheel. Momentum carried Feat forward four more years, with co-founder keyboardist Bill Payne filling in for the fading Lowell, though for most fans his excursions into Weather Report territory uprooted the band from their strengths.

Soon after his patchily brilliant 1979 solo album, a heart attack took Lowell at 34. Feat disbanded, but since 1988 the survivors have reconvened. Now and then Lowell's spirit moves their music, still willin'.

> "HOLLYWOOD BRAT LOWELL GEORGE WAS BESOTTED BY THE MUSICAL, MYTHIC SOUTH."

CAST YOUR VOTES!

This month you chose your Top 10 Little Feat LPs. Next month we want your Depeche Mode Top 10. Send your selections to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Depeche Mode' and we'll print the best comments:

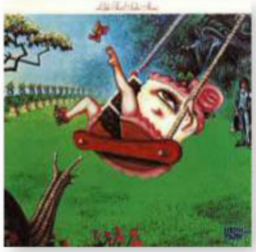
LITTLE FEAT
ROOSTER RAG
NO EXCUSES
NO REGRETS

10 Little Feat
Rooster Rag

HOT TOMATO/ROUNDER 2012, £13.33

You Say: "This album is great too." Eddie Cavin, MOJO Facebook

When Lowell George died, Little Feat disbanded, the surviving members only reuniting in 1988 to record and tour, like the Grateful Dead plugging into a multi-generational fanbase hot for a good-time, all-American jam band. Here, an old pal of theirs, Fred Tackett, fills in for Lowell while drummer Gabe Ford sits in for Richie Hayward, who died in 2010. This album does both memories proud with good songs – Tackett's Church Falling Down evokes The Neville Brothers or Los Lobos – an earthy vibe and loosey-goosey ensemble musicianship with nothing to prove. With nine other originals, plus covers of Mississippi John Hurt and Willie Dixon blues, roots-rock fans can safely skin it back, spark up a fat one and enjoy.



4 Little Feat
Sailin' Shoes

WARNER BROS 1972, £5.49

You Say: "SAILING SHOES!!! !! Cat fever anyone??" Monchy Corugedo, MOJO Facebook

A tough, ringing Ted Templeman production showcased Lowell seizing the songwriting reins and the world-class drumming of Richie Hayward, who would be recruited by fan Robert Plant in 1985 as the nearest thing to John Bonham for precision, power and funk; check out the bump'n'grind swamp rock of Cold Cold Cold for proof. Willin' was definitively re-recorded but every song shines, from the Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young style of Easy To Slip to the light-heartedly hedonistic coke anthem title track, reflected in the mock-Fragonard sleeve painting courtesy of artist Neon Park (Martin Muller). Most foregrounded of all, Lowell's sly, soulful voice matches his sleazy slide guitar.

Alamy, Getty Images

LITTLE FEAT
THE LAST RECORD ALBUM

9 Little Feat
The Last Record Album

WARNER BROS 1975, £7.13

You Say: "Has Long Distance Love, which is the best soul vocal by a white guy ever." Mark Steell, MOJO Facebook

In which, like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat, Lowell starts to disappear, gradually fading away on this album's two studio successors, *Time Loves A Hero* (1977) and *Down On The Farm* (1979), to a sad little grin. Bill Payne (keyboards) and guitarist Paul Barrère picked up the slack, with the jazz fusion-lite hip itch and squiddly-plinking synth/electric piano ingredients that struggled to comfortably blend in the gumbo. But Lowell's Long Distance Love is a ballad to rival Willin', while Payne and Barrère's All That You Dream is catchy soft-rock *à la* The Doobie Brothers, who, that year, Feat famously blew clean off stage at the Rainbow in London's Finsbury Park.

LITTLE FEAT
WAITING FOR COLUMBUS

8 Little Feat
Waiting for Columbus

WARNER BROS 1978, WARNER BROS/RHINO DELUXE EDITION 2002, £9.82

You Say: "Simply the greatest live album of all time." Conor Shields, MOJO Facebook

Officially, the best Lowell-era Feat live album, and until the recent explosion of legitimised bootlegs the only one. Yet, like so many fussily-mixed and post-produced live albums of the time, it undersells the totality of a great band surfing the love of a huge roomful of fans. Recorded in August 1977 in the Feat fan hotbeds of Washington DC and London's Rainbow, again, the performances are terrific, even if Bill Payne's Zawinulesque synth sounds like we're trapped in a tent with a giant mosquito. But crank up the straightforwardly-recorded and mixed 75 minutes of Little Feat Rainbow 1977 on YouTube and be blown away.

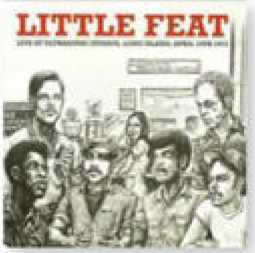
LOWELL GEORGE
Thanks I'll eat it here

7 Lowell George
Thanks I'll Eat It Here

WARNER BROS 1979, £6.00

You Say: "One of the finest unheralded albums of all time. So sweet." Peter Doyle, MOJO Facebook

But for Lowell's death 10 days after this solo debut's release in June 1979, *Thanks…* would have been, fans hoped, the start of a creative rebuilding process rather than one of the great what-ifs of rock'n'roll. The star and leader was still struggling with his mislaid songwriting muse, and so cover versions abound, including the Los Angeles rococo of Rickie Lee Jones's Easy Money and Jimmy Webb's Himmler's Ring and, more rootsily, Ann Peebles' I Can't Stand The Rain and Allen Toussaint's What Do You Want The Girl To Do. However, 20 Million Things clearly glimpses the old George magic, even if future Feat man Fred Tackett's Find A River is better.



6 Little Feat
Live at Ultrasonic Studios, Long Island, April 1973

KEYHOLE 2014, £9.47

You Say: "An amazing document of Lowell's Little Feat doing what they did best." David Hughes, via e-mail

How many Feat live albums do you really need? Well, when capturing the band in their prime and pomp, how many have you got? Cut before an appreciative gathering in the same radio studio as *Electrif Lycanthrope* would be some 17 months later, this finds the still-fresh *Dixie Chicken* line-up freely firing off each other, roiling joyously in their own funk, and smoking hot on songs whose studio versions were never set in stone so never cloned live but played in every sense of the word. There are no duds, no overdubs – merely a band that has reached a telepathic level of ensemble performance and individual feel.

Little Feat

5 Little Feat
Little Feat

WARNER BROS 1971, £5.00

You Say: "An album just different enough not to fit in with (the rest of) the Feat catalogue." Alec Dinwoodie, MOJO Facebook

So resounding a commercial failure was this band debut on LA's superhip Warner Bros label that it was nearly Little Feat's only album which, by now, would have become an early Americana cult curio languishing in the shadows of The Band and *Let It Bleed*. However, the album grooves deliciously in songs ranging from the rootsy, poetic art-rock of Brides Of Jesus to a couple of sincere paeans to the trucking life – the blackly comic Truck Stop Girl and the heartachingly romantic Willin' with Ry Cooder guesting on slide guitar after Lowell had managed to prang his hand making a model airplane, of all things. Much covered, Willin' was the lifeline that gave them another shot.

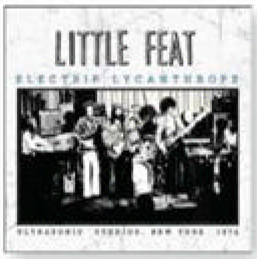
FEATS DON'T FAIL ME NOW
LITTLE FEAT

3 Little Feat
Feats Don't Fail Me Now

WARNER BROS 1973, £5.92

You Say: "Some of the most dynamic music anyone ever put on vinyl!" Joseph Heddon Jr, MOJO Facebook

In which the George/Payne/Hayward/Gradney/Clayton/Barrère aggregation peaked as a studio recording outfit. Lowell's opener, Rock And Roll Doctor, is funk at its most suggestively sultry, while Bill Payne's Oh Atlanta boogies breezily with his honky-tonk chops in full flight, and Paul Barrère's Skin It Back smoulders with weed wisdom and an easy-rolling mood. Like Jethro Tull morphing into Emerson, Lake & Palmer in four minutes flat, the Payne/George composition The Fan is surprisingly funky and, like the re-recorded Cold Cold Cold/Tripe Face Boogie, both harkens back to Feat's Frank Zappa roots and indicates their jam-band journey in the future.



2 Little Feat
Electrif Lycanthrope

SMOKIN' 2014, £8.10

You Say: "This has to be heard!" Ian Gibson, via e-mail

Along with *Dylan At The Albert Hall*, the Stones' *Brussels Affair* and very few others, *Electrif Lycanthrope* was hallowed by '70s rock connoisseurs as a must-have live bootleg to rival those artists' classic studio LPs and truly bottled the lightning. And this when Little Feat were no superstars. Nor were the raves mere insider hype; a full-blooded, punchy recording of a live set broadcast by New York's WLIR rock station on September 19, 1974, *Electrif Lycanthrope* funks, stretches and takes 12 of Feat's greatest songs way out and soul deep. The greatest get-down party ever? A jam-hot contender.

LITTLE FEAT DIXIE CHICKEN

1 Little Feat
Dixie Chicken

WARNER BROS 1973, £5.83

You Say: "A fatter sound, funkier, the rhythm section's more exciting." Michael Finkenzeller, MOJO Facebook

With Delaney & Bonnie alumni Kenny Gradney (bass) and Sam Clayton (congas, percussion) on board, Little Feat thickened their rhythmic stew with real Southern ingredients, while new guitarist Paul Barrère instantly formed a partnership with Lowell as their lines entwined, as gnarly as bayou mangrove roots, as evocative of backwoods America as a lonesome train whistle or passing truck's roar. Fat Man In The Bathtub sleazily showcases this perfect line-up, a song to be taken more clitorally than literally; the title track has a typical Lowell-written sting in the tail of its rustic romance.

NOW DIG THIS

WILLIN'
THE STORY OF LITTLE FEAT
BEN FONG-TORRES

Lowell George's straw hat, sharecropper bib denim overalls and ever expanding waistline were Little Feat's only concession to live special effects, but, boy, did they cook. Lowell era stage footage is usually European; Live In Holland 1976 (DVD and CD, Eagle Rock, 2014) from the Pinkpop Festival and Skin It Back – The Rockpalast Collection (DVD, Epitaph, 2009) cut the following year in Essen's Grugahalle are both excellent. Telling the story, Feats First: The Life & Music Of Lowell George (DVD, MVD/Pride, 2015) is an object lesson in getting a rock music biopic right and works as an audio visual complement to Ben Fong Torres' solid, authorised Willin': The Story Of Little Feat (Da Capo Press, 2013).

He's not so fine: Allen Klein (left) with client George Harrison and Ravi Shankar.

One for the money

A new biography of Beatles and Stones manager follows the money – but not the man. By Paul Trynka.

Allen Klein

★★★

Fred Goodman

EAMON DOLAN. £18

The mission statement of the celebrated, notorious Allen Klein was most tellingly summarised in his own Christmas cards: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil – for I am the biggest bastard in the valley."

Fred Goodman gained the co-operation of Klein's son, Jody, for this, the first biography of Klein, yet he is commendably uninhibited by the estate's involvement. Goodman establishes precisely how big a bastard Klein was in financial terms, for he is impressively lucid at unravelling the baroque business deals. We learn exactly how The Rolling Stones' original contract with Andrew Loog Oldham and co-manager Eric Easton was structured – and how this would later allow Klein to control the band's music and publishing. This was clearly a conflict of interest, for Klein used his position to get not a manager's slice, but the whole damn pie. We also learn of Klein's cynical management of George Harrison's law suit over the resemblance between The Chiffons' He's So Fine, and Harrison's My Sweet Lord; Klein ultimately bought the rights to The Chiffons song, effectively making him a party to litigation against an artist he managed. There's a clear-headed analysis of Klein's part in Paul McCartney's High Court action to dissolve The Beatles – which Klein comprehensively muffed.

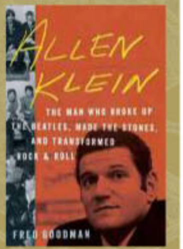
Despite many such illuminating descriptions, the man at the centre of the story remains an enigma. One cause is Goodman's reliance on existing sources – often we read four or five familiar quotes before we reach a new interviewee.

Perhaps the most crucial relationship in the book is that with Andrew Oldham, the man who eventually sold him the Stones for $750,000. Goodman interviews Oldham, but never really nails him on how the younger man felt about being manipulated and, eventually, becoming Klein's creature. Oldham's final break with the Stones came when he apparently abandoned them in the wake of the Redlands bust. Yet Goodman omits to point out that it was Klein who'd engineered Oldham's absence. As Oldham's partner, Tony Calder, told me, "Allen totally played Andrew… it was horrible." In fact, Oldham's description of the relationship in his own book, 2Stoned, remains far more insightful.

With Allen Klein, perhaps more than anyone, the devil was in the detail. Too often, though, the financial rather than psychological detail takes precedence here. Klein's genius derived from his troubled upbringing, which he'd use as a weapon to draw people in. This was a legacy of his father, who consigned him to an orphanage in Newark, and left Klein on a permanent quest for validation. Yet Goodman seems curiously uninterested in Klein senior. Philip Klein was "sent to America". From where? Did he flee pogroms? Was he abandoned by his own parents? Here, and elsewhere, Goodman shies away from the personal detail that, rather than detracting from the story, would make it compelling.

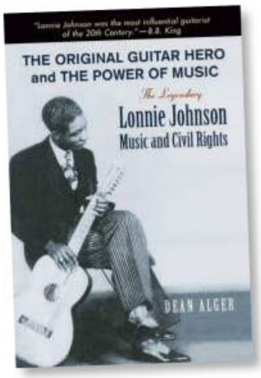
There are many beautifully written snippets, and odd intriguing details of his contradictory behaviour, but by the end we hardly gain an understanding of Klein beyond that Christmas card motto. Allen Klein is a forensic investigation into the manager but not, alas, the man.

"I AM THE BIGGEST BASTARD,' WROTE KLEIN. GOODMAN ESTABLISHES PRECISELY HOW BIG A BASTARD HE WAS IN FINANCIAL TERMS."


ALLEN KLEIN
THE MAN WHO BAILED OUT THE BEATLES, MADE THE STONES, AND TRANSFORMED ROCK & ROLL
FRED GOODMAN

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Despite his supposed acumen, Klein bungled [illegible] leaving George Harrison exposed to a huge tax [illegible]
- Klein was a genius at drawing-in troubled artists, notably John Lennon, but failed in his attempt to do the same with Bob Dylan.
- Klein cheated at tennis.


"Lonnie Johnson was the most influential guitarist of the 20th Century." —B.B. King
THE ORIGINAL GUITAR HERO and THE POWER OF MUSIC
The Legendary
Lonnie Johnson
Music and Civil Rights
DEAN ALGER

The Original Guitar Hero And The Power Of Music: The Legendary Lonnie Johnson

★★★★★

Dean Alger

UNT PRESS. £21

First Lonnie Johnson biog aims to restore his reputation as one of the most influential guitarists – ever.

This ambitious book sets out to place Lonnie Johnson, a musician known mostly to blues diehards, as a cross-cultural visionary in the vein of Charlie Christian or Jimi Hendrix, and succeeds brilliantly. Johnson is mainly known as an influence on B.B. King, who treasured his smooth delivery and fluid guitar style; for this alone, he is significant, but Alger's book is a potent reminder of how Johnson blazed a modernist trail across many decades and genres, via his visionary work with Louis Armstrong, for instance on 1927's immortal Savoy Blues, his duets with white guitarist Eddie Lang, and much more. Occasionally Alger's writing falls prey to conversational diversions – yet this is hardly a defect, for it derives from an enthusiasm that is entirely appropriate to his subject. With a lucid explanation of Johnson's music, plus many anecdotes both poignant and inspiring, this excellent biography does full justice to an under-appreciated musical titan.

Paul Trynka

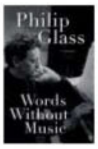
Words Without Music

★★★★

Philip Glass

FABER & FABER. £22.50

The American composer's absorbing autobiography.



Glass has a crisp, witty writing style that pulls the reader in – his accounts of helping out in his father's record store in Baltimore as a youth and his growing love of music are fascinating. The recollections of working in experimental theatre in an early-'60s New York artistic milieu informed by John Cage Samuel Beckett and La Monte Young are exciting, although his dictum back then not to "wallow in the known" takes on an ironic resonance given his more recent music, which often recycles familiar elements. The account of the realisation of Einstein On The Beach, 1976's extraordinary five-hour music theatre project, is similarly compelling. Personal details veer from candid to heavily self-edited: his affair that broke up his first marriage is quickly glossed over, while two of his four wives are not even mentioned. But anyone interested in what makes him tick musically will be amply rewarded.

Mike Barnes

Billie Holiday – The Musician & The Myth

★★★

John Szwed

WILLIAM HEINEMANN. £20

Lady Day's life and music under the microscope.

BILLIE HOLIDAY
THE MUSICIAN & THE MYTH
JOHN SZWED

Much has been written about Billie Holiday since her death at the age of 44 in 1959, though the majority of the myriad biographies that she has inspired have mostly focused on the somewhat sordid, headline-grabbing details of her short life; her attempted rape, child prostitution, drug and alcohol addiction and the abusive men she had relationships with. This new 'biography', which coincides with the centenary of Holiday's birth, follows a different trajectory: Szwed doesn't ignore this aspect completely but in the book's first half he is more interested in unravelling the fact from the fiction in Holiday's life, before embarking on a forensically detailed examination of the singer's music and unique vocal style. Drawing on chapters omitted from Holiday's autobiography, Lady Sings The Blues – a work that he believes was purposely awash with factual inaccuracies – Szwed convincingly illustrates how Holiday consciously helped to create her own mythology.

Charles Waring

New Order

★★★★

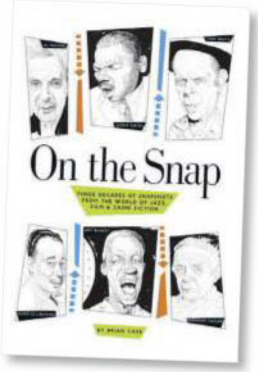
Kevin Cummins

RIZZOLI. £29.95

Hugely evocative photographic record of the band from 1981 to 1993.

As New Order took shape, colour images increasingly became part of the music press. But Kevin Cummins, midfield general of Mancunian pop photography, also understood that this group were increasingly moving beyond the black-and-white rock gravitas that had so suited Joy Division. In place of cold exterior shots came poolside shades and sunlight – plus crisp interiors, from the Haçienda to New York's Paradise Garage. Mirroring this new kind of modernity, the full-page artefact images are as potent as the band photos – a receipt for a synthesizer and a meticulously hand-plotted flow chart for the programming thereof; a hand-written rider that hints at the rising tide of hedonism (48 cans of Holsten Pils, four bottles of Asti Spumante). Assembled with a stylishness that befits the band, the book amounts to a compelling Mancunian Marcel Proust of a time capsule.

Roy Wilkinson



On The Snap

★★★★

Brian Case

CAUGHT BY THE RIVER. £15

Compact treasure-trove of jazz and film anecdotage from one of Britain's finest music writers.

While the more abundant mythologies of some of his punk-era NME peers suggests that empty vessels do indeed make the loudest noise, this short but elegantly illustrated volume of fireside monologues from south London-bred jazz sage Case will delight long-term fans and wide-eyed first timers alike. Not so much a compilation of greatest hits as a running commentary on Case's hard-boiled personal pantheon of jazz musicians, writers, photographers, actors and film-makers, it abounds with pithy insights (Chet Baker was "a black cloud marking time") and great stories (Duke Ellington's baritone sax player Harry Carney employing circular breathing techniques to beat a breathalyser test is a particular favourite). In lieu of a companion volume detailing Case's encounters with female subjects (there are none of those here, literally none), this enticing hors d'oeuvre must surely herald a main course smorgasbord of original pieces.

Ben Thompson

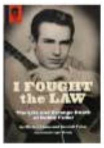
I Fought The Law: The Life And Strange Death Of Bobby Fuller

★★★

By Miriam Linna & Randell Fuller

KICKS BOOKS. £13

Story of short-lived but magnetic rocker who died in 1966 at the age of 23.



Penned by Bobby Fuller's brother and bandmate Randell, and Norton Records' major-domo Miriam Linna, this first ever biography of the I Fought The Law hit-maker functions as both an emotional family tale and *noir* mystery. A talented Texan who went to Los Angeles to find fame, Fuller also found sex, drugs and the strange underbelly of show business. While Fuller's life and work are the focus, his death – officially ruled an accident or suicide by asphyxia – casts a shadow over everything. Suspicions as to foul play were there from the start, but the case was never properly investigated by police, either due to official neglect or more nefarious forces. Though bombshells abound, Linna's narrative is often unwieldy and Randell Fuller's recollections sometimes windy. Still, there's much that will grip readers in this vivid, lurid view of the mid-'60s music scene.

Bob Mehr

Hokey-cokey: New Order's Bernard Sumner (right) and Peter Hook shake it all about.

Kevin Cummins

The leading men

The Who's management duo were stars in their own right. By **Pat Gilbert**.

Lambert & Stamp

★★★

MOTOCINEMA, DIR. JAMES D. COOPER. C

One of the curious developments – regressions? – of rock music from the Britpop era and beyond is the decline of the band manager as star turn; if Johnny Rogan was ever to update his Starmakers And Svengalis tome it would be with the slimmest of chapters.

Rogan's book was awash with the adventures of Colonel Tom Parker, Don Arden, Brian Epstein, Peter Grant, Malcolm McLaren, Simon Napier-Bell – figures as bold and well defined as the artists whose careers they steered. For some, there were accusations of exploitation and abuse (Parker; Arden; McLaren), while others were endearingly protective and paternal (Epstein), and/or deliciously gangsterly, if it wasn't you getting a kicking (Grant).

Precisely where The Who's extraordinary management duo fell into this continuum is explored by director James D. Cooper in his fascinating film documentary. The paradigm of the collision between high and low that energised Swinging London, Kit Lambert was the Oxford-educated son of the English classical composer Constant, and Chris Stamp the tearaway younger brother of actor Terence, a product of the same East End streets that fomented the Kray Twins.

Meeting as lowly assistant directors at Shepperton Studios, each recognised the same fearlessness and sense of adventure in the other; indeed, Lambert was the survivor of a 1961 expedition to the Amazon in which his travelling companion and school friend Richard Mason was clubbed to death by natives.

Twigging that rock band management was the new Wild West (or uncharted Amazon basin), their ambition in summer 1964 to make a film documentary of a London pop band on the rise led them to discover The Who – then The High Numbers – who at the time were under the tutelage of Mod scenester Pete Meaden.

The exchange of ideas between band and new management (they bought the group for £250) was to prove exhilarating and almost immediately fertile; expensive guitars were smashed nightly as a means to get noticed, reckless behaviour was positively encouraged and Pete Townshend was nurtured as a songwriter and original thinker. Crucially, money was an abstract element in the set-up, with Kit cavalierly securing credit on the strength of his cut-glass accent and Belgravia address. Amid the chaos, Lambert opened up Townshend's mind to classical forms, and in 1969 *Tommy*, the first large-scale rock opera, was born.

Much of Cooper's narrative will be familiar to Who fans, but perhaps not the archive footage of the linguistically gifted Kit being interviewed for contemporary French and German TV docs in the relevant native tongue, or rare newsreel of events like a historic performance of *Tommy* at the Met opera house in New York. Stamp, who died in 2012, appears at length in what is a fitting last will and testament, while the troubled, homosexual Kit – killed in 1981 in murky circumstances (though the film glosses over this) – is represented by lifelong friends including Robert Fearnley-Whittingstall (father of TV chef Hugh) and the explorer John Hemming, a fellow veteran of the fateful Amazon trip.

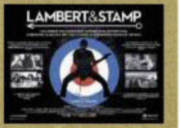
After *Tommy*, both Lambert and Stamp slipped into alcoholism and drug abuse, a development mirrored by Keith Moon's self-destruction, and were eventually sacked amid much rancour in the mid-'70s. But today Townshend and Daltrey have nothing but praise for the duo, recognising that the injection of energy and ideas by these older, wiser, maddening egomaniacs was central to The Who's attaining true greatness.

Perhaps in 2015, there's a lesson here to be learned…

Dynamic duo: Chris Stamp (left) and Kit Lambert (right) with Pete Townshend; (insets) Chris and Kit let the train take the strain (far left) and (left) another take for Daltrey and Lambert at the Railway Hotel, Harrow & Wealdstone, summer '64; (below) veteran explorer Lambert helps Keith Moon pack his bags.

Pictorial Press (2)

"GUITARS WERE SMASHED NIGHTLY AS A MEANS TO GET NOTICED."



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Lambert and Stamp's links with The Who ended in 1978 at Shepperton Studios, ironically where the two men first met and later owned by the band. Accused of mismanagement, Stamp said: "We bought this place, we can't have been that bad!"
- Lambert and Stamp's record label Track signed Jimi Hendrix, Arthur Brown, Golden Earring, and, in its late-'70s twilight, Johnny Thunders and Shakin' Stevens.
- Lambert was named after his father Constant's painter friend Christopher 'Kit' Wood, who threw himself under a train in 1930. Constant's mistresses included ballerina Margot Fonteyn.

Industrial Soundtrack For The Urban Decay

★★★★

DIR AMÉLIE RAVALEC/TRAVIS COLLINS, LES FILMS DU GARAGE. C/DVD

The noise revolution that came to bury pop music but instead reinvigorated it.

At least as abrasive on the ears and an affront to conventional aesthetics as The Velvet Underground a decade earlier, Throbbing Gristle's self-named 'Industrial music' has infiltrated the wider culture far more extensively. While indie bands rewrote the Lou Reed songbook, TG's anti-music-cum-exotica crashed every boundary, their fiercely independent group-as-corporation model set DIY standards, and they were among the first to embrace samples and digital. In giving prominence to humanity's beastlier side, they also anticipated the era of round-the-clock bad news. Tapping into what TG's Genesis Breyer P-Orridge here calls, "The decay of industrial wealth into poverty and chaos," Industrial turned out to be far more visionary than punk. Featuring testimony from ex-TG members, Boyd Rice, SPK's Graeme Revell and other affiliates, this fast-moving, skilfully edited 52-minute short hits all the right notes, from Ballard to power tools.

Mark Paytress

Heaven Adores You

★★★

DIR NICKOLAS ROSSI, SPECTICAST/EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT. C/DVD

Elliott Smith's brutally curtailed life – as told by everyone but himself.

"I'm the wrong kind of person to be big and famous," whispers Elliott Smith, at the outset of this gruelling posthumous doc. Heaven Adores You pitches straight in with his tragic demise, how an Oscar nomination for his song inclusion in 1997's *Good Will Hunting* brought him a celebrity he couldn't handle, and drove him to heroin addiction and apparent suicide. In his uneasy youth he leaves Dallas to escape his father, then quits Portland after a relationship ends. We follow his passage from grunge-era noiseniks Heatmiser ("I sounded like Joe Strummer with a cold"), to spellbindingly intimate solo acoustica. Unlike Kurt Cobain in Montage Of Heck, Smith remains elusive on screen, an enigma sourced mostly via spooky audiotape. Heroin makes him nasty, not himself,

but the opening sequence's big question – how such a fragile soul could've taken his own life by stabbing himself twice in the chest – remains a dreadful mystery.

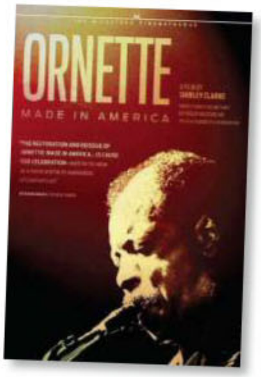
Andrew Perry

Ornette: Made In America

★★★★

DIR SHIRLEY CLARKE, MILESTONE FILMS & VIDEO. DVD/BR

Or, How To Break Rules: a 1985 US doc starring jazz legend Ornette Coleman.



Multi-instrumentalist/composer Ornette Coleman blows boundaries (and mostly a transcendent alto sax) via his harmolodic musical theory wherein the lines between fixed themes and improvisation dissolve. Another maverick, late director Shirley Clarke (The Connection, Portrait Of Jason), blended documentary and script into a seamless whole. The heart of this inspiring film is a performance of Coleman's composition Skies Of America by his group Prime Time and the Fort Worth Symphony in 1983. Re-enactment of the artist's Fort Worth, Texas childhood sets the back story of his humble origins against the glitzy world of wealthy art patrons – a metaphor for America's class and racial divide, with two visionaries (both Coleman and Clarke) presenting highly personal blueprints for recreating the possibilities of their forms. The ambitious concept is enlivened by Ornette's natural warmth and his touching relationship with his drummer and son Denardo Coleman.

Michael Simmons

Lowell George: Feats First

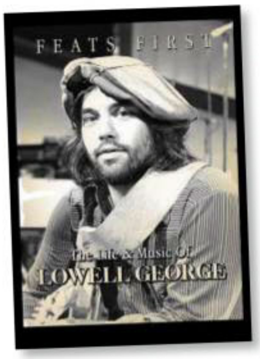
★★★

DIR ELLIOT RANDLE, PRIDE. DVD

A look at Little Feat's big toe.

Key elements that Little Feat co-founder Lowell George brought to a table that fed crowds: a honey-glazed vocal box; slide guitar technique matched in subtlety only by George Harrison; a demented worldview dubbed "cartoon consciousness" ; classic songs like Willin' and Sailin' Shoes; an insistence on doing it all his way – the last named an attribute he called (in bad French) "droit gauche" (even his translation skills were applied according to whim). George is not given his historical due, so this documentary is welcome. While the talking heads here are not yapping on a level articulation field, some excel (colleagues Ira Ingber and Martin Kibbee) and pal Van Dyke Parks is the most eloquent raconteur in rock'n'roll. The direction is equally erratic, but anyone who makes an educated effort at hipping the masses to The Way Of Lowell wins a gilded sailin' shoe statuette.

Michael Simmons



Life is a losing game

Live fast, die young: the director of Senna films another moving tragedy. By Geoff Brown.

Amy

★★★★

DIR ASIF KAPADIA/ON THE CORNER FILMS. C JULY 3

HAVING MADE his name with Senna, a gripping biographical film of the late Brazilian motor racing driver, film-maker Asif Kapadia has turned his attention to another car crash, the short, wasted life of the wonderfully promising north London jazz and soul singer Amy Winehouse, which ended in 2011 when the 27-year-old succumbed to alcohol poisoning.

Amy uses archive footage and voiceover interviews, thus the tale unfolds in Winehouse's, and others', words. It is both a harrowing portrait of someone ill-equipped to handle the acclaim, the hangers-on and, finally, the paparazzi that her talent attracted, and a movie which angers, in that it echoes Philip Larkin's This Be The Verse: "They fuck you up your mum and dad/They may not mean to but they do." The parents do not emerge well from Amy – as has been widely reported, the Winehouse family, particularly father Mitch, are incensed at the portrayal of them.

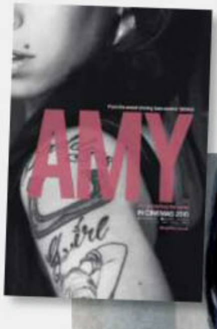
But it's Amy herself who suggests that her parents' separation, when she was nine, marked a starting point of her depression and bulimia. Raised by her paternal grandparents, her grandmother Cynthia, father and brother opened Amy's exceptionally receptive ears to singers, mostly jazz, and as music consumed her, a route clear of her problems loomed.

Shots of Amy with childhood friends like Juliette Ashby or singing with a jazz orchestra aged 16 establish her precocity and talent. Most comfortable with music and musicians, she is also funny, outspoken, honest. Chaperoned by Nick Shymansky, a manager who becomes perhaps too much of a friend, serious success beckons after 2003's debut album *Frank*.

But then there are men. Very useful as triggers to songwriting: Stronger Than Me (her first boyfriend, seven years older than Amy); Rehab (her father tells her not to go, a quote, mischievously edited in the film, Mitch says); Back To Black, both song and album (husband Blake Fielder-Civil – how utterly miserable she looks after marriage to the man who'd allegedly introduced her to heroin).

Like Senna, Amy is a film heavy with portents. There seem to be many spurned opportunities to intervene and rescue the singer as she swirls in a sea of alcohol, a wasteland of drugs, a fog of depression. Some of it beggars belief: in 2009 she flees cameras and drugs to bodyguard Andrew Morris's family on St Lucia, and looks happy and very healthy; early in 2010 Mitch arrives with a *camera* crew to shoot a documentary. Desolate, she acts, and sounds, betrayed.

As we know, drunkenness and addiction disrupted most of the final years of her professional and personal life. Ayrton Senna virtually predicted the crash that ended his life. Amy's death was as forseeable, but no less shocking.



Just friends: Amy in younger, happier days with Juliette Ashby (right).

Loss leader

Brooklyn bard finds joyful relief in playing grief-stricken new songs to a home crowd. Sophie Harris packs a hanky.

Sufjan Stevens

Kings Theatre, Brooklyn

It shouldn't really be a surprise that this show feels like a funeral. The album that Sufjan Stevens is supporting tonight chronicles his response to his mother's death in 2012. *Carrie & Lowell* explores his grief at losing a parent who suffered from schizophrenia and alcoholism and abandoned the family when Stevens was a baby. When she remarried Lowell Brams there was a brief, relatively golden period wherein the kids visited Carrie and Lowell in Oregon for a handful of summers, before she removed herself from her children's lives again. So, there is grief for his mother's death but also for being denied the maternal love that he longed for.

All the same, it is striking how much tonight's concert feels like watching someone deliver a eulogy. On the album the songs are hushed and economical, admitting their sorrow best in the solitude of the solo listening experience. But tonight Stevens is standing on stage before thousands of people at the Kings Theatre in Brooklyn, a vast, ornate palace. Without the double-tracking of the album, his lone voice in this huge space sounds exposed and vulnerable. Opening with the *Carrie & Lowell*'s spiderweb-delicate first track, Death With Dignity, Stevens looks like a little boy, even now at the age of 39. There's a sense, as with eulogies, of the speaker trying to get it right – not really for those present, but for the loved one who's gone.

Stevens has quite the history as a performer. Touring breakthrough album *(Come On Feel The) Illinoise* in 2006, he and his musicians (including Annie Clarke) dressed up as cheerleaders and formed a human pyramid on-stage. He later decked out an entire orchestra in butterfly wings (and he wore a hawk headdress), and for 2010's *Age Of Adz*, he and his crew wore Day-Glo robot costumes. The first time this writer saw Stevens, though, was at a low-key show in 2004 playing the quiet songs of *Michigan*. I'd gone to see the support act, Gravenhurst – my friend Nick Talbot. A decade later, Nick died; *Carrie & Lowell* became a balm of sorts. Doubtless many people tonight are exploring their own sorrow, and there is something about records like his latest that ask you to bring your own experience; like stained glass windows revealing their beauty only when the light passes through them.

Accordingly, the lighting on-stage looks exactly like church windows, only here the panels are illuminated with old Super-8 film footage of Stevens' family; there are scenes of Carrie getting married, and, at the end of the show, images of him playing on the beach as a tiny boy, loss of innocence folded into this larger contemplation of grief.

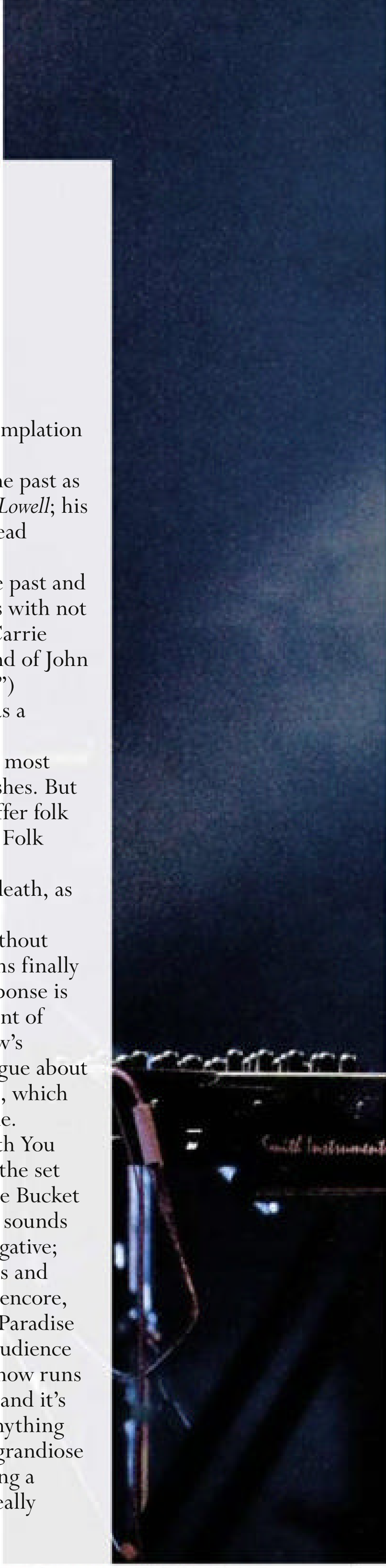
Stevens acknowledges the idea of the past as a foreign country throughout *Carrie & Lowell*; his attempts to re-remember are like "a dead horse". And yet, here is this incredibly courageous attempt to reach out to the past and understand – or at least come to terms with not understanding. (Seeing him singing "Carrie come home!" on-stage puts one in mind of John Lennon's devastating "Mama don't go!")

Carrie & Lowell has been described as a return to folk for Stevens, and the live arrangements tonight are spare for the most part, with occasional electronic flourishes. But the album and particularly the show offer folk experiences on a more profound level. Folk music developed as a necessary way of processing life's big truths, especially death, as a shared experience.

After playing most of the record without uttering a word to the audience, Stevens finally says "Thank you", and the crowd's response is ecstatic, relieved even: the gig equivalent of drinking at a wake. He breaks the show's intensity with a lengthy, goofy monologue about growing up with his dad and stepmum, which has the charm of a 1960s comic routine.

Fan favourites like To Be Alone With You and Sister follow, and Stevens finishes the set with *Carrie & Lowell*'s album-closer Blue Bucket Of Gold, which erupts with electronic sounds into something overwhelming and purgative; the lights go berserk with search beams and gigantic mirrorballs. Returning for an encore, Stevens dedicates For The Widows In Paradise to his stepfather Lowell, who's in the audience tonight. The pair stayed close (Brams now runs Stevens' Asthmatic Kitty record label) and it's easy to read into the refrain, "I'd do anything for you". He closes the show with the grandiose hit Chicago, which feels a bit like getting a going-home present at a funeral: not really necessary, but welcome all the same.

Remember, remember: Sufjan Stevens on-stage at Brooklyn's beautifully refurbished Kings Theatre.



"WHEN STEVENS FINALLY SAYS 'THANK YOU', THE CROWD'S RESPONSE IS ECSTATIC, RELIEVED, EVEN."

Guy Eppel (7)

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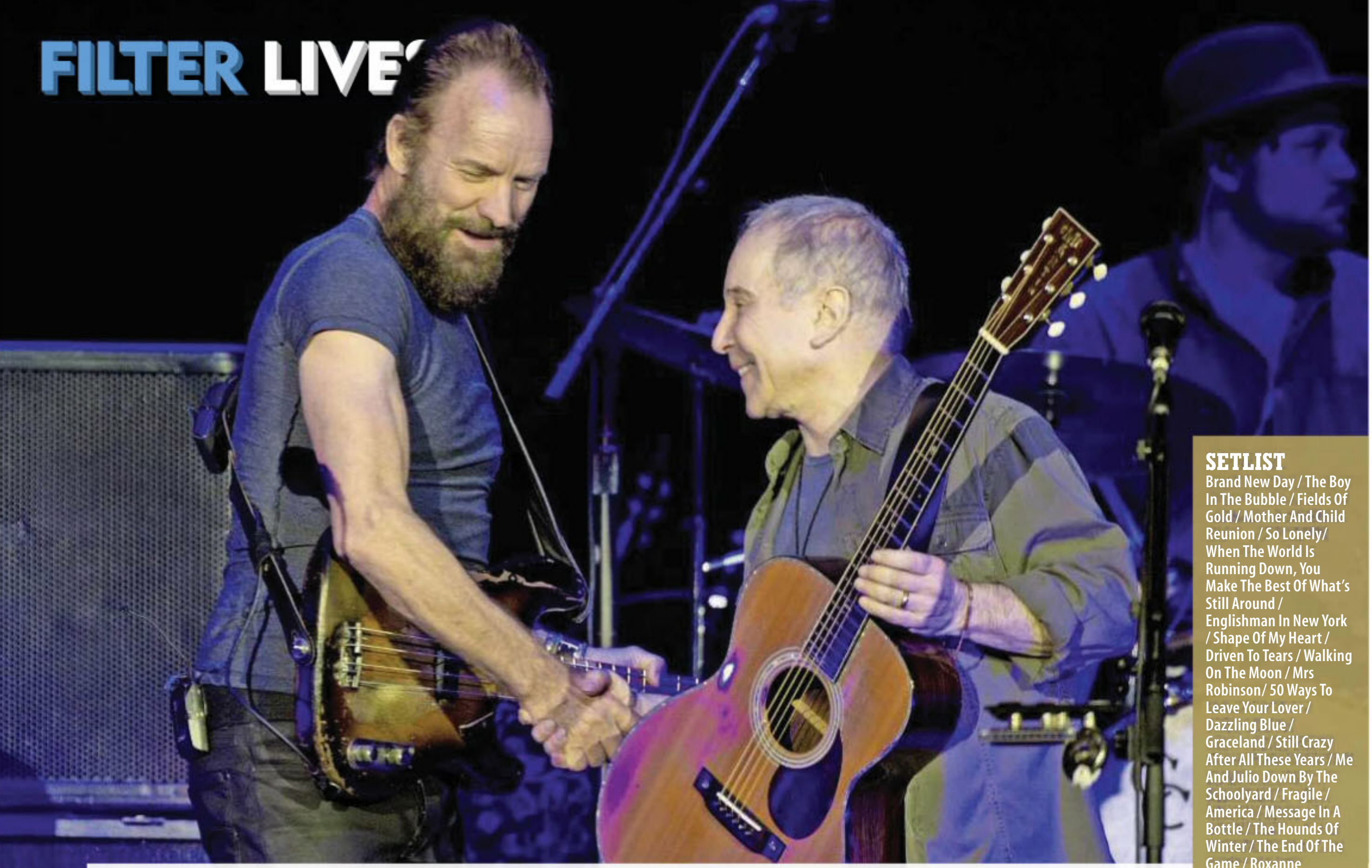
SETLIST

Death With Dignity / Should Have Known Better / Drawn To The Blood / All Of Me Wants All Of You / Eugene / John My Beloved / The Only Things / No Shade In The Shadow Of The Cross / Carrie & Lowell / The Owl And The Tanager / In The Devil's Territory / To Be Alone With You / Futile Devices / Sister / Blue Bucket Of Gold / For The Widows In Paradise / That Dress Looks Nice On You / Chicago



All together now

Former neighbours turned arena-packing superduo and genuine love-match. By Mark Blake.

Paul Simon & Sting

02 Arena, London

On paper, it's a curious marriage: the '60s American folkie and the '80s English pop star. But on-stage it certainly works. The Paul Simon and Sting 'superduo' have been filling arenas in the US since 2014. On the second of two nights at London's 02, there's barely an empty seat in the house, and nary a hint of tribalism within the audience. People are here to see them both.

Simon and Sting met when they were neighbours in the same New York condo in the 1980s, before having a 'what if?' moment a couple of years ago. They exude an easy camaraderie, and throughout a three-hour show (a bit *too* long, yes) seem like men hopelessly in love with music: their own and each other's.

They stroll on from opposite sides of the stage and ease into Sting's Brand New Day, before the two expansive backing bands break out the skittering rhythms of Simon's The Boy In The Bubble. But the first big ripple of excitement comes, strangely, when Simon sings a verse on Fields Of Gold. Hearing that pristine voice on another man's song is a subtle reminder that while the gym-buff and now trawler man-bearded Sting towers over his touring partner, if pushed there's only one daddy in the room.

That's not to put Sting down, though. Both musicians trade off each other brilliantly. They sing each other's songs (Sting bravely tackling America), perform separately with their own groups, and offer hit after hit, plus some occasionally extraneous album tracks. Simon's Dazzling Blue dazzles; Sting's The Hounds Of Winter doesn't.

There are subtle tweaks made to old favourites: So Lonely acquires a wonderful tuba solo; Roxanne smoulders rather than explodes under the audience-strafing red lights, and Mrs Robinson has become bluesier and sultrier in her old age.

Of the two, though, Sting seems to dominate. Perhaps it's just his way. When Simon first leaves the stage to let his partner do his thing, he slips quietly into the wings. When Sting does the same before 50 Ways To Leave Your Lover, he strides off holding his bass over his head in a victorious, showbiz gesture.

Nevertheless, it's Sting who coaxes the audience out of their seats with a booming, brass-laden Walking On The Moon and, again, with Message In A Bottle. But it's Simon who charms them into submission: unselfconsciously and brilliantly granddad-dancing on Me And Julio Down By The Schoolyard.

They bow out with Bridge Over Troubled Water and The Everly Brothers' When I Will Be Loved? and an expression on Sting's face of old-fashioned, fanboy admiration. As he'd said earlier: he can soundtrack his life with Paul Simon songs. On tonight's showing, this marriage is doing just fine.

Old friends/ bookends: Sting and Paul Simon in London; (below) Who's the daddy? It's you, Paul Simon; bearded Sting sees the end of the set.

"SIMON AND STING SEEM LIKE MEN IN LOVE WITH MUSIC, THEIR OWN AND EACH OTHER'S."

SETLIST

Brand New Day / The Boy In The Bubble / Fields Of Gold / Mother And Child Reunion / So Lonely/ When The World Is Running Down, You Make The Best Of What's Still Around / Englishman In New York / Shape Of My Heart / Driven To Tears / Walking On The Moon / Mrs Robinson/ 50 Ways To Leave Your Lover / Dazzling Blue / Graceland / Still Crazy After All These Years / Me And Julio Down By The Schoolyard / Fragile / America / Message In A Bottle / The Hounds Of Winter / The End Of The Game / Roxanne (incorporating Ain't No Sunshine) / Desert Rose / The Boxer / That Was Your Mother / Homeward Bound / The Cool, Cool River / Hearts And Bones / Mystery Train (incorporating Wheels) / Diamonds On The Soles Of Her Shoes / You Can Call Me Al / Cecilia / Every Breath You Take / Bridge Over Troubled Water / When Will I Be Loved?

Splash (2), Getty Images

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STEAMSYNDICATE

WHO MIXED BRUNEL AND THE BEATLES?

Back in the '70s I had a Beatle-ish single featuring a song about railway engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, which, if I remember rightly, came from an award-winning film. I've long forgotten the song's title or who performed it. Can you find out the name of song and maybe come up with some info on the film?
Ronnie Brooks, Sheffield

Fred says: I'm pretty certain the record you have in mind is Oh Wot A Big One/G.W.R. by Jonathan Hodge, released by Polydor in August 1976. A Lennon-like sound, it came from the soundtrack of Great, a 25-minute animated film directed by Bob Godfrey. Vaguely Yellow Submarine-like, it was voiced by the likes of Richard Briers and Harry Fowler, winning a BAFTA and an Oscar for the best animated film of 1976. Godfrey, perhaps best known for creating the TV series Roobarb, told The Guardian in 2001 that, after reading a book about Brunel, he asked British Lion Films for some money to make a half-hour cartoon about the Victorian engineer. "Yes, they said, here's £20,000. They thought the sun shone out of my arse at the time. They'd have given me money to animate a toilet if I'd asked them." Sadly, neither the soundtrack, nor the film is available today due to what are termed as complex copyright issues.

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'OH WOT A BIG ONE'

WHAT DID KATE SAY TO HER GOLD HAUL?

I realise gold discs, given for high-selling singles and albums, are not made of solid gold but are they gold plated?
J. Forbes, via e-mail

Fred says: Christie's Rock And Pop Memorabilia dealt with the subject in 2003, claiming that "at best they are gold-plated, at worst, they are covered in gold paint". The book also nixed the idea that it was the copies of the actual best-selling discs that received the gilding treatment. Any handy disc or even old stampers have qualified for use: the guide relates the story of how, according to Paul McCartney, The Beatles stripped the plating from one of their gold disc awards then realised it was actually a release by one-time arch rivals, The Rolling Stones. Dave Breese, who runs a company called Gold Disc that has supplied gold- and silver-plated platters to artists such as Roger Waters, Mark Knopfler and Depeche Mode, confirms this information, but adds that gold discs have to be framed to have any real value. Adds Breese, "All the artists who perform at the Hammersmith Apollo receive one of our frames – Kate Bush received a very special award for her 22 nights there. I believe her reaction was, 'Wow, wow, wow, wow, unbelievable'." However, official discs awarded by such organisations as the BPI and RIAA for sales achieved remain more collectable than those of a merely commemorative nature.

WEEKEND
Film Star Record Album

Godfrey gave rock'n'roll to you: (clockwise from main) Brunel and the Fabs pal up; doomed Jayne Mansfield; Macca and Linda with gold disc; the Great single; the ill-fated flexi Weekend Film Star.

WAS THIS DEATH BY FLEXI?

I was told by a friend that the *Weekend Film Star* album was once regarded as the unluckiest record ever released. What was the LP and why was it so unlucky?
Pat Allen, via e-mail

Fred says: The 'album', from the mid '50s, was marketed by Weekend magazine via Rainbow Records and comprised five 78 rpm interview flexi discs. Each featured a film star offering a few words about nothing in particular to their fans. Their notoriety of the release rests on the fact that the stars were James Dean, Jayne Mansfield, Sal Mineo, Natalie Wood and Tab Hunter. Just 24, Dean died in a much-documented car-crash in 1955; Jayne Mansfield also perished in a horrific traffic accident at the age of 34; Sal Mineo (37) was stabbed to death while parking his car; Natalie Wood mysteriously drowned at 43. Leaving Tab Hunter as the only one to survive the curse of the flexis.

WHO WAS WAITS'S HORN-MAN?

Early in 1981 I saw Tom Waits at London's Victoria Apollo Theatre. He was, of course, brilliant and was backed by superb tenor sax player whose name I have forgotten. Who was it, and could you recommend one of his albums?
Pete Mulligan, via e-mail

Fred says: Waits's accompanists at the Apollo gigs were Gene Cohen (bass) and Teddy Edwards (tenor sax). There should have been a drummer, but he was left behind following a dispute. Edwards, who died in 2003, was a Jackson, Mississippi-born bebop hero who'd played with such as Charlie Parker and Dexter Gordon. He played on some Waits albums including the soundtrack to One From The Heart. A soulful player with a great tone, Edwards made several excellent solo LPs, including *The Inimitable…* (Xanadu, 1976), *Blue Saxophone* (Antilles, 1992) and *Mississippi Lad* (Antilles, 1991), which has Waits's vocals on two tracks, Little Man and I'm Not Your Fool Anymore. "Tom never took any money for his playing," Edwards later confessed.

HELP FRED

I saw Jimmy McGriff at Klooks Kleek in late 1969. Playing support was a fine British organ-led trio or quartet. I've often wondered who they were. Any ideas?
James Hardwick, via e-mail

CONTACTFRED

Write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG.

OR e-mail Fred Dellar direct at fred.dellar@bauermedia.co.uk

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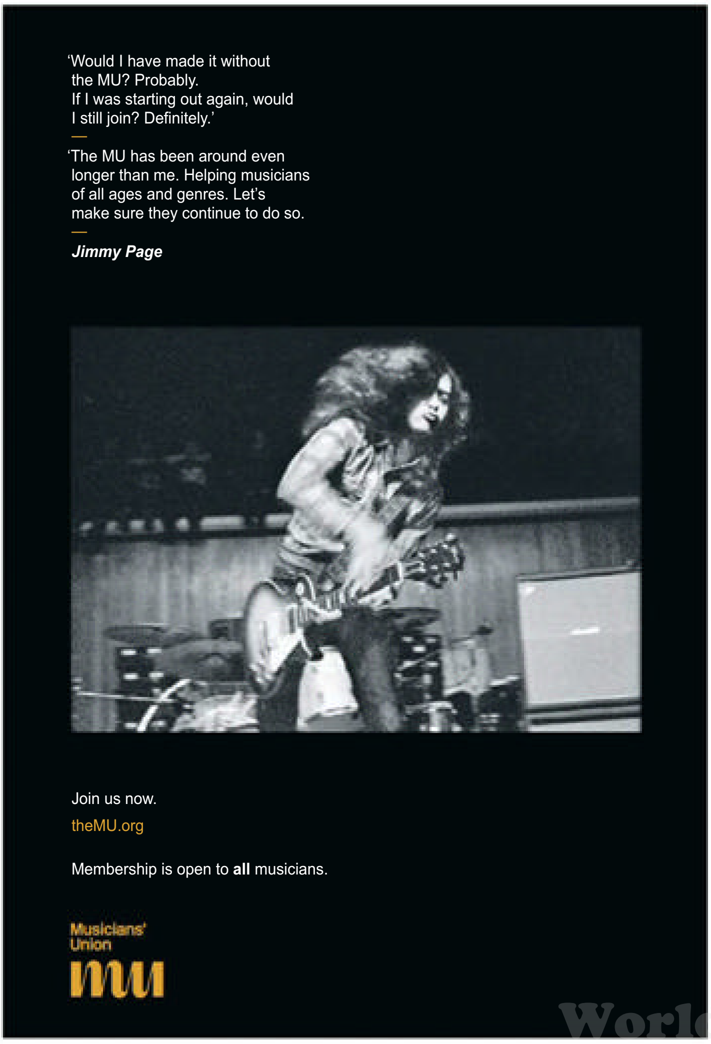

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Win! A covetable RP3 turntable with Elys2 cartridge and a Fono mini A2D.

Records are back, back, back to such an extent that there's an official vinyl chart (good to see Godspeed You! Black Emperor in with a bullet at Number 12). And if you haven't already, you'll need something great to play your discs on. Which is where this month's fantabulosa prize comes in!

Courtesy of Rega, the Essex-based hi-fi company who manufacture all their gear in the UK, we have a superb RP3 turntable with Elys2 cartridge (retail price £549) and a Fono Mini A2D (retail price £89) to give away. The RP3 will integrate into any hi-fi system and, in conjunction with the Rega Elys2 moving magnet cartridge, allows you to extract maximum detail from your vinyl; it's also been awarded 'Product Of The Year' for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 by What Hi-Fi magazine. The Rega Fono Mini A2D is a high quality phono pre-amplifier for use with any moving magnet cartridge: its USB interface means you can easily transfer vinyl to your PC.

So complete Fresh Fred Nice's crossword and send the finished version to Ready, Willing And Turntable, MOJO, 3rd Floor, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 8JG. **Closing date is July 2.** For the rules of the quiz, send an SAE to that same address.

rega

ANSWERS

MOJO 258

Across: 1 Dave Grohl, 5 Faster, 8 Virginia Astley, 10 Wildlife, 12 No More The Fool, 15 Babylon By Bus, 17 No Mercy, 18 Tasty, 19 John Denver, 21 An Ideal, 23 Mallard, 26 Hejira, 27 Outrage, 28 Ibiza, 29/36 Veedon Fleece, 30 Meteora, 34 Kids, 37 Nektar, 38 Obie Trice, 39 Mystikal, 40 Balance, 41 The Door, 43 Geto Boys, 46 Aces, 48 Rhymes, 50 Tsunami, 51 Close To You.

Down: 1 David Byrne, 2 Vertigo, 3 Guided By Voices, 4 Onion, 5 Future Islands, 6 Toyah, 7 Rockfield, 9 Almost Blue, 11 I'm A Boy, 13 Tanya Donelly, 14 Of Change, 16 Burma, 20 Eve, 22 It Takes Two, 24 Nick Lowe, 25 Wild Gift, 26 Ham, 29 Val Kilmer, 31/49 across Every Day Is Like Sunday, 32 Beck, 33 I've Lost You, 35 Rain, 37 Nebraska, 39 Meg, 42 Hurt, 44 Taste, 45 Banjo, 47 Girl.

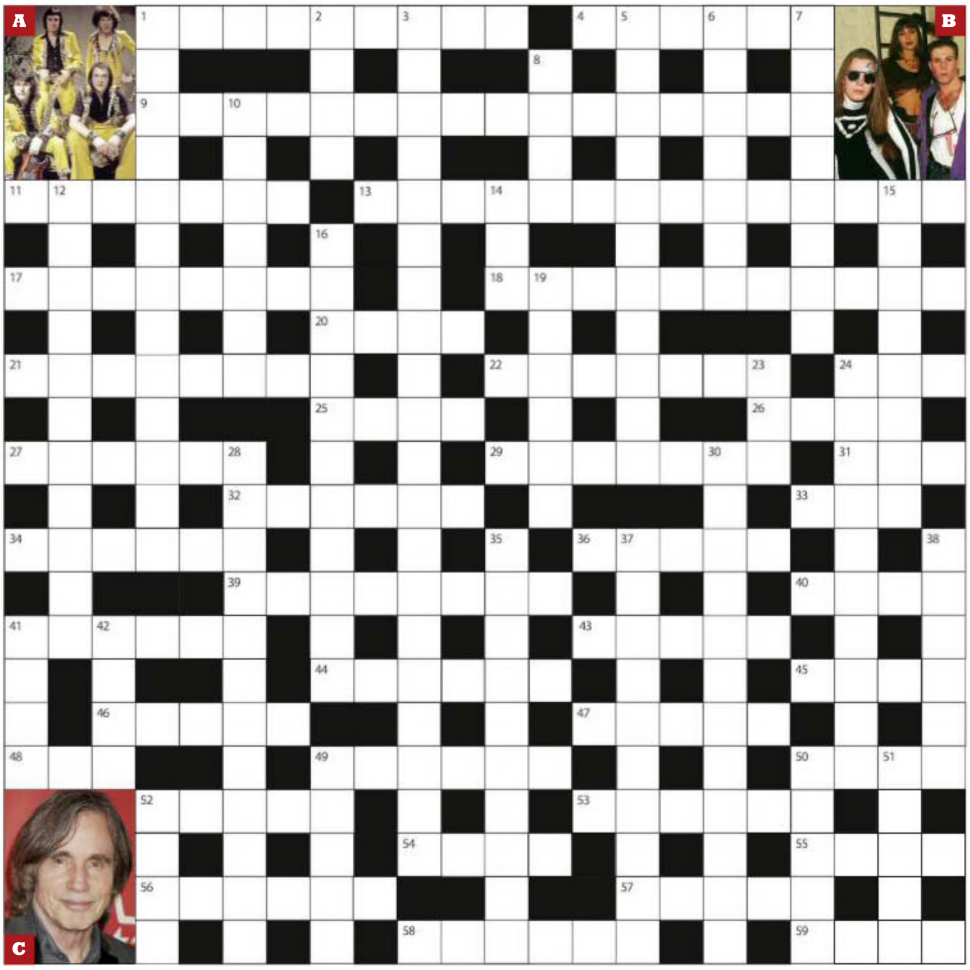
Winner: **Miss F Hansen** of **Margate, Kent** wins two tickets to see Ray Davies's musical Sunny Afternoon at the Harold Pinter Theatre, plus an overnight stay at the Novotel London West hotel.

ACROSS

1 As a sessioneer he was known as 'Lil' Jim Pea' (5,4)
4 Gummed-up Wedding Present hit (6)
9 A Bob Marley song or a remix album by Lauryn Hill, Chuck D etc (5,4,7)
11 Like Jaco Pastorius or John Entwistle maybe (7)
13 Higher than most, like a Paul Weller single (5,3,6)
17 Bill Withers' offer of support (4,2,2)
18 Folk song recorded live by Paul McCartney in 1999 (3,2,6)
20 It was without pity claimed Gene Pitney (4)
21 Rose Blum gets upset providing a Black Sabbath album (3,5)
22 Billie – or a Madonna success (7)
24 Enquire like The Smiths (3)
25 ---- As A Rock (AC/DC) (4)
26 The sound of the Bunnymen? (4)
27 Black misspelt birds who broke up in 2015 (6)
29 Their ranks once included Vince Melouney (3,4)
31 See photoclue A (3)
32 US genre, from the streets (3,3)
33/36 Record producer, worked with Kim Carnes, Bonnie Raitt, The Motels etc. (3,5)
34 Queen's chart cry for help (4,2)
36 See 33
39 Where Kraftwerk's dummies were displayed? (8)
40 See photoclue B (4)
41 Lou Reed's 2-CD anthology (1.1.1.3)
43 The Stones' salivating dog opus (5)
44 Reach a decision regarding a Disclosure album? (6)
45 Bill Callahan's band could be a bit thick (4)
46 Heartbreaker Tom (5)
47 As chuffed as Pharrell Williams (5)
48 Iron Maiden's number of minutes to midnight (3)
49 The Kinks' King Kong classic (6)
50 Their debut album was titled *Leisure* (4)
52 Amy Winehouse song that won three Grammy Awards (5)
53 Ms Reeves of Vandellas fame (6)
54 One ---- Over The Line (Brewer & Shipley) (4)
55 Could be Hart, Ditto or Orton (4)
56 ----- For E's and Wizz (Pulp) (6)
57 Elvis Presley's chart shade of blue (5)
58 Grimy and misspelt by Christina Aguilera (6)
59 ---- Addy (Kid Creole & The Coconuts) (4)

DOWN

1 See photoclue C (7,6)
2 Amon Düül II album, big in the Himalayas perhaps (4)
3 "Where the streets are paved with blood, with cataclysmic overtones" (The Jam) (1,4,2,7,6)
5 Chumbawamba's percussive hit (11)
6 Electronic duo formed by Matt Black and Jonathan More (7)
7 Parody rocker "Weird Al" (8)
8 Musical instrument (4)
10 *Your* -------, Morrissey's tribute to Arsène Wenger? (7)
12 --- --- ----- To Rock? (Wizzard) (3,3,5)
14 It was Sammy Hagar's last solo album before he joined Van Halen (1.1.1.)
15 Their debut album was *3 Feet High And Rising* (2,2,4)
16 Love Is A Bourgeois Construct, they said (3,4,4)
19 Richie, Bart, Hampton maybe (6)
23 McAlmont and Butler's song of affirmation (3)
24 Influential jazz pianist who made hit LP *But Not For Me/Live At The Pershing* (5,5)
28 The Zombies explain an invisible woman (3'1,3,5)
30 Album with which Prince celebrated his release from Warner Bros (12)
35 Eels album, it has a Dog Faced Boy (10)
37 "Tyrannosaurus marches before us, lions laugh at the smell of a gun" (Babylon Zoo) (6,4)
38 Pearl's profession, according to Elkie Brooks (6)
41 Brel song, covered by Alex Harvey (4)
42 Device used to shorten string length on a guitar (4)
49 The most famous road in recording? (5)
50 Let Me Be Your Fantasy they requested in 1994 (4,1)
51 British pop band whose debut single, Say You Do, gave them instant success (5)
52 Unsurprisingly, this went high in the chart for PiL (4)



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THISMONTH

BARRY ANDREWS AND XTC

They began in a hurry in Swindon. But the need to write and anecdote fatigue spelled the end.

Wiltshire cats: XTC in 1977 (from left) Barry Andrews (at breaking point), Terry Chambers, Andy Partridge, Colin Moulding; (below left) the band play Toronto, January 1979 (Barry's penultimate XTC show); (below) Andrews today.

HELLO JANUARY 1977

The Wheatsheaf, Newport Street, Swindon. Evening. The four young men have short hair and their trousers are narrow at the ankle. These signifiers are of crucial importance at this historical/cultural moment. As the young men gulp their brown, high-grade beer their voices become loud. They are attracting attention. They feel, all of them, that they deserve it.

All four are musicians – three in an existing local band XTC (Andy Partridge, Colin Moulding and Terry Chambers, formerly The Helium Kidz, formerly Star Park), one is an auditionee, a keyboard player (me, formerly a factory worker and unemployed person).

The evening was meant to be spent in a local sports hall playing music to establish possible compatibility but a logistical snafu means they've decided to get to know each other instead via the medium of heavy drinking.

All four young men have a similar idea: to get famous playing rock music. They are quite serious: they've thought about it, believe it's possible and are in a hurry.

The conversation is mostly anecdotal: since all four have lived in Swindon for years one area of common ground is the profusion of local 'characters': there is Big Jimmy who "practises on me sister – come and 'ave a go". There is Bucking Blind Bob who has a tunnel vision impairment and very little self-control in the presence of pornographic material – when he – yes – "bucks". There are many more. The pub resounds with their ribald laughter, and eventually, one of them throws up in the pub loo. The young men seem to be having fun. There's a lot of energy, without doubt. Although they haven't yet played a note together, they already look like a band.

HELLO JANUARY 1979

In an office above The Affair, Theatre Square, Swindon (now Foxies X-Treme Lap Dancing Club, for all you XTC psychogeographers). Morning. Two years later, and, astoundingly, many of the wished-for things have actually happened. XTC have got a record contract, become mildly famous, and generally had quite a lot of medium-debauched rock'n'roll fun.

The new guy, though, has realised that, since he joined a group whose aesthetic was well established and needed no supplementary input, his writing contributions are not required.

Also, by now, he's sick of all the Everyday Tales of Quirky Swindon Nutters, having heard them far too many times and in new exotic places where the last thing he wants to think about is Penhill Rec, the notorious recreation ground on Swindon's dodgy Penhill Estate, in 1973. Clearly, it's time to get some new anecdotes.

So they all meet in manager Ian Reid's office one sober, grey day – it's above a nightclub called The Affair, which Ian runs. The name, in its '70s tackiness, is representative of Mr Reid in many ways: he owns a Jensen Interceptor, which he never calls "the car", always "the Jensen".

Ian says it's time to commit to another record. Our man, being unable to do so, goes all Captain Oates. All the band are terribly British about it, in fact. No hugs, offered or reciprocated. That was not The '70s Way.

> "THE BAND ARE TERRIBLY BRITISH ABOUT IT... NO HUGS, OFFERED OR RECIPROCATED."

Actually, there is affection – but it will take a few years more to unearth it.

I left the group, moved to London: eventually met Carl Marsh, Dave Allen and Martyn Barker, formed Shriekback (who also signed record deals, toured the world and so on). Shriekback was an aggregation of similar minds rather than an accident of geography and, as such, was a Homecoming, and has been home ever since, really.

As for XTC, wouldn't have missed it, it was a blast, etc, but you have to know when to leave the party, unlike actual parties, where my timing isn't so acute.

Without Real String Or Fish, Shriekback's 13th studio album, is available now, only at http://shriekback.com/store.

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